DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 433 382 UD 032 988

TITLE	Privilege, Poverty, and Power: Remembering Paulo Freire's Work.
INSTITUTION	Ohio Univ., Athens. Coll. of Education.; National-Louis Univ., Evanston, IL.
ISSN	ISSN-1085-3545
PUB DATE	1999-00-00
NOTE	57p.; Edited by the Collaborative Action Researchers for Democratic Communities.
AVAILABLE FROM	Institute for Democracy in Education, College of Education, M. Cracken Hall, Ohio University, Athens, OH 45701-2979; Tel: 740-593-4531; e-mail: democracy@ohiou.edu
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Serials (022)
JOURNAL CIT	Democracy & Education; v13 n1 Spr 1999
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Adult Education; Democracy; *Developing Nations; Educational Change; *Educational Philosophy; Elementary Secondary Education; *Poverty; Power Structure; Teacher Education; *Teaching Methods
IDENTIFIERS	*Freire (Paulo)

ABSTRACT

This special edition honors the life and work of Paulo Freire by recalling the impact he had and continues to have on educators and students. Articles in this issue are: (1) "Editor's Introduction" (Tom Wilson); (2) "Nita's Elegy to Paulo Freire (in Portuguese) 'Privilegio, Pobreza e Poder'" (Ana Maria Araujo "Nita" Freire); (3) "Elegy to Paulo Freire (in English) 'Privilege, Poverty and Power'" (Ana Maria Araujo "Nita" Freire); (4) "The Bottom of the Barrel" (David Keiser); (5) "The Paulo Freire Democratic Project" (Penny Bryan and Tom Wilson); (6) "The courage to stand alone, a found poem" (Bobbi Fisher and Jan Osborn); (7) "The Revolutionary Legacy of Paulo Freire" (Peter McLaren and Valerie Scatamburlo); (8) "Questions for a Rock" (David Keiser); (9) "Teacher Research: Praxis for the Oppressed" (Susie Weston-Barajas); (10) "Power, Politics, and the Middle School Classroom" (Chris Byron); (11) "The Right To Choose Choice" (Cora Sorenson); (12) "Learning Together from Each Other" (Cheryl King); (13) "Uncovering a Myth" (Deedee Carr); (14) "How Fifth Grade & Paulo Freire Taught Me To Teach Graduate School" (Lani M. Martin); (15) "South Africa: Lessons from Freire's Humanizing Pedagogy" (Ivy N. Goduka); (16) "Paulo Freire in Memory" (Zumara Cline); and (17) "River Stone" (David Hart). (SLD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

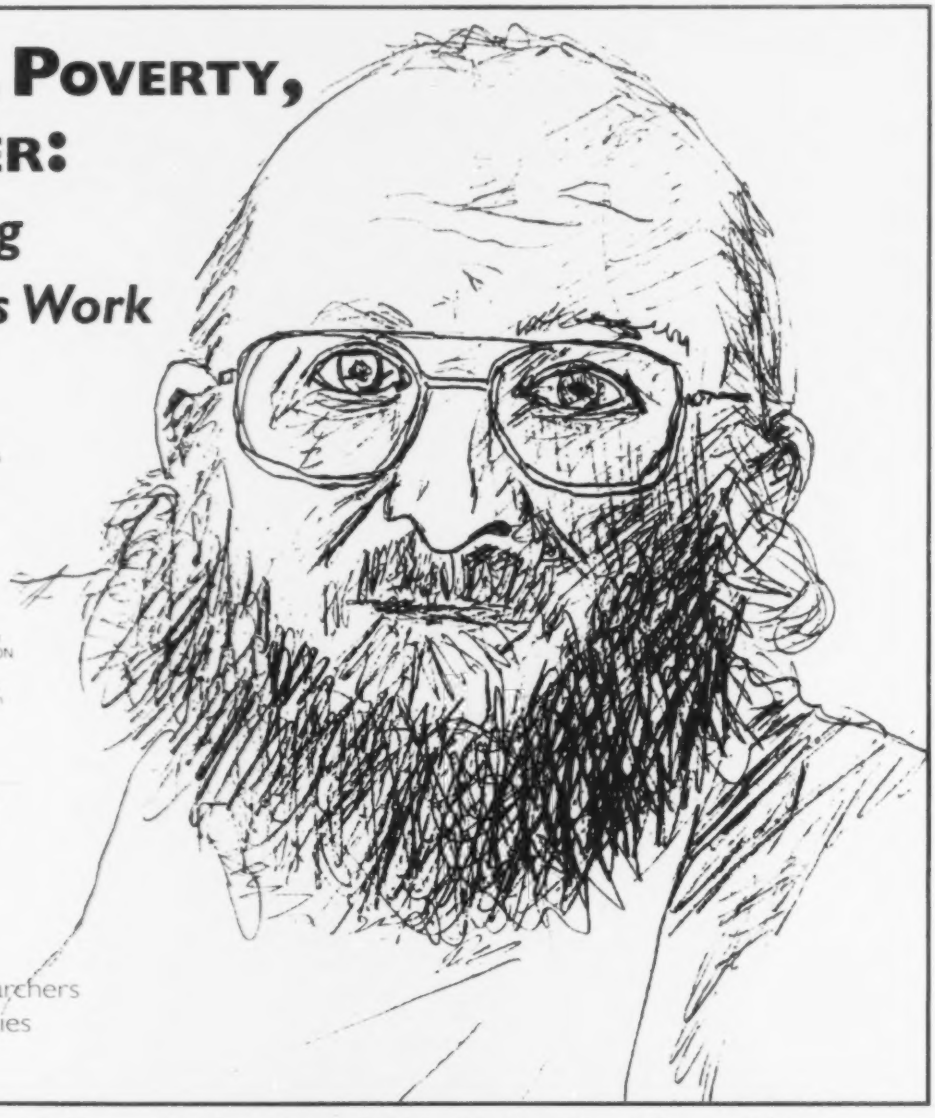
Spring $8.00 1999

Democracy & Education

The magazine for classroom teachers

ED 433 382

PRIVILEGE, POVERTY, AND POWER:
Remembering Paulo Freire's Work



PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Jay Hutchison

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Guest Editors:
CARDC Group,
Collaborative Action Researchers
for Democratic Communities
Orange County, California

UD 032 488

Supported by the Colleges of Education of Ohio University, Athens, Ohio and National-Louis University, Evanston, Illinois

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Democracy & Education

Statement of Purpose

Democracy & Education, the magazine for classroom teachers, is a journal of the **Institute for Democracy in Education.**

IDE is a partnership of all participants in the educational process — teachers, administrators, parents and students — who believe that democratic school change must come from those at the heart of education.

IDE promotes educational practices that provide students with experiences through which they can develop democratic attitudes and values. Only by living them can students develop the democratic ideals of equality, liberty and community.

IDE works to provide teachers committed to democratic education with a forum for sharing ideas with a support network of people holding similar values, and with opportunities for professional development.

Democracy & Education is the main editorial outlet of **IDE**, which also sponsors conferences and workshops and publishes curricular materials. **Democracy & Education** tries to serve the ideals we value in our classrooms and our lives by providing information, sharing experiences and reviewing resources. For more information or to become a member of the **Institute for Democracy in Education,** please write or call:

The Institute for Democracy in Education
College of Education
McCracken Hall
Ohio University
Athens, OH 45701-2979

Phone: (740)593-4531
Fax: (740)593-0477
E-mail: democracy@ohiou.edu

To learn more about IDE, visit our website at
http://www.ohiou.edu/ide/home.html

Cover Illustration: Tom Wilson

Democracy & Education

Volume 13, Number 1

In this issue

Editor's Introduction
Introduction by Tom Wilson 2

Nita's Elegy to Paulo Freire (in Portuguese) Privilégio, Pobreza e Poder
Elegy by Ana Maria Araujo "Nita" Freire 3

Elegy to Paulo Freire (in English) Privilege, Poverty and Power
Elegy by Ana Maria Araujo "Nita" Freire 4

The Bottom of the Barrel
Poetry by David Keiser 6

The Paulo Freire Democratic Project
Essay by Penny Bryan and Tom Wilson 7

the courage to stand alone, a found poem
Poetry by by Bobbi Fisher and Jan Osborn 14

The Revolutionary Legacy of Paulo Freire
Essay by Peter McLaren and Valerie Scatamburlo 16

Questions for a Rock
Poetry by David Keiser 18

Teacher Research: Praxis for the Oppressed
Teacher File by Susie Weston-Barajas 19

Power, Politics, and the Middle School Classroom
Teacher File by Chris Byron 23

The Right to Choose Choice
Student Essay by Cora Sorenson 28

Learning Together From Each Other
Essay by Cheryl King 30

Uncovering a Myth
Teacher File by Deedee Carr 33

How Fifth Grade & Paulo Freire Taught Me to Teach Graduate School
Teacher File by Lani M. Martin 37

South Africa: Lessons from Freire's Humanizing Pedagogy
Essay by Ivy N. Goduka 42

Paulo Freire in Memory
Poetry by Zumara Cline 49

River Stone
Inspiration by David Hart 50

Democracy & Education

Editor
Jean Ann Hunt
National-Louis University

Guest Editors
CARDC Group
Orange County
California
(See editor's note page 2)

Copy Editor
Jay Bashara

Designer
Carolyn King, LunaGraphics

Cover Illustration
Tom Wilson

Democracy & Education is a non-profit publication of the Institute for Democracy in Education. Editorial and business offices are located in McCracken Hall, Ohio University, Athens, OH 45701.

The Life of Paulo Freire

By Tom Wilson

In this special edition of *Democracy and Education* we honor the life of Paulo Freire by recalling the impact he has had and continues to have upon our lives. We want to provide a forum by which we share both our personal memories of him and the dreams we have to further his work: our "pedagogy of hope." 'We' in this case refers to both university-based folks as well as educational practitioners such as teacher-researchers, students, and administrators who have been strongly influenced by him.

In *Pedagogy of Hope* (1994), Paulo writes of revisiting Jaboátao, the place of his childhood:

> That rainy afternoon, with the sky dark as lead over the bright green land, the ground soaked, I discovered the fabric of my depression. I became conscious of various relationships between the signs and the central core, the deeper core, hidden within me. I unveiled the problem by clearly and lucidly grasping its "why." I dug up the archeology of my pain (p. 30).

In the Notes to the same volume, his wife "Nita" Freire comments on this passage. She interprets Paulo as speaking literally of ". . . the archeology he is practicing upon the emotions of his past. Reliving these emotions, he executes an analysis that searches, that veritably 'digs' into the particular emotions that have caused him to suffer, to fall into depression" (p. 221).

Yet this dig, in the final analysis, was healing for him. He continues, ". . . since then, never again, has the relationship between rain, green, and mud or sticky clay sparked in me the depression that had affected me for years. I buried it, that rainy afternoon I revisited Jaboátao" (p. 30).

Our desire, our dream for this edition, therefore is to engage in an archeological dig of our own pain of his death, to reflect deeply upon the meaning his struggles have for ourselves. Yet, more than understanding is required. We may unravel the fabric ". . . in which the facts are given. . ." (p. 30), discovering the why of our relationship to him. While absolutely necessary, such reading is not sufficient unless it moves to concrete action:

> Now the person who has this new understanding can engage in political struggle for the transformation of the concrete conditions in which the oppression prevails. . . (and). . . it is (not) enough for the worker to have in mind the ideas of the object to be produced: that object has to be made (p. 321).

Our remembrances therefore, to be complete, must offer, beyond reflection, concrete exemplars of the sorts of actions through which the tenacity, love, and humanity of Paulo Freire can continue to educate. We hope that the work herein does exactly that.

We have included the efforts of many voices in terms of position, of experience, and of manuscript form. Our writers include faculty from post- secondary education institutions, graduate students, public school teachers, and one high school student. Several of our contributors have published many times, others have done much less, and for others, this is their first opportunity. Additionally, we have included a variety of writing forms: essays, expository, participatory research reports, and poetry. While each author's specific and direct knowledge of Paulo's work varies considerably, the unifying theme is a commitment to the critical, democratic, liberating, and humanizing core of his life's vocation.

A note needs to be made about the joint editorship of this edition by the Collaborative Action Researchers for Democratic Communities (CARDC). Established in 1995 under the auspices of the School of Education, Chapman University in Orange, California, CARDC combined two former university/school partnerships (Collaborative Action Researchers and the Institute for Democratic Communities) into one. From this union, the current goal of CARDC was derived: *To engage in critical, participatory research to bring into greater congruence the espoused theory of democracy with daily, lived educational practice.* The members of CARDC who reviewed and accepted the articles for inclusion in this edition are, in alphabetical order: Chris Byron, Middle School Teacher; Deedee Carr, 3rd Grade Teacher; Cheryl King, K-3 Multi-age Teacher; Lani Martin, Lecturer; Tina Montemere, 3rd Grade Teacher; Fred Stegmann Jr., Prospective Teacher; Suzane SooHoo, Associate Professor; Susie Weston-Barajas, 3rd Grade Teacher, Tom Wilson, Associate Professor, and Emily Wolk, Elementary School Title 7 Coordinator.

Tom Wilson is an Associate Professor in the School of Education at Chapman University in Orange, California.

Privilégio, Pobreza e Poder

Elegia de Nita a Paulo Freire

Paulo sempre foi uma pessoa carismática, insinuante e fascinante. Nasceu com essa qualidades, mas soube desenvolvé-las ao extremo.

Por isso lembro-me dele desde minha mais tenra idade, com cerca de 4 anos de idade, quando ele iniciando seu curso secundário na escola de meu pai, já ere uma presenca viva e destacada entre colegas e professores do Colégio Osvaldo Cruz. E no meio de minha primeira família, mais especialmente.

Paulo sempre soube, com seriedade e simpatia, aproveitar as chances que sua própria personalidade abria para si. O privilégio que teve de estudar numa excelente escola tirou-o de uma vida de pobreza na qual vivia numa pequena cidade —Jaboatão—perto de Recife. Afastado desta, onde tinha nascido e então voltara a estudar, pela ingénua decisão de seus pais de fugir da crise capitalista mundial de 1930, Paulo construiu sua própria vida forjada na luta constante e na conduta ética. Realizou seus sonhos de saber e colocou este á servico de uma utopia politica através de esforco e tenacidade, de abnegacão e empenho, não só pela dadivosidade de :neu pai que lhe ofereceu os estudos.

A seriedade ética, ao lado da generosidade e da esperanc¸a, são marcas do homem Paulo que se forjaram da sua infância na sua adolescéncia. Paulo construiu um poder, mas um poder diferente do poder pelo qual tantos lgutam, via de regra por quaisquer meios, por mais ilícitos que sejam, para "vencer" nesse mundo tão competitivo. O poder de Paulo se centrava na sua praxis libertadora a favor do oprimido de qualquer forma, espécie ou natureza, não só no poder de sua palavra estética, ética, gramatical e semânticamente bem construída, lúcida e adequada. Seu poder de apreender, compreender, discernir, refletir, convencer, lutar, denunciar e engajar-se esteve sempre á servic¸o desse seu sonho humanista: homens e mulheres, todos sem excecão de cor, classe, religião ou género, construindo e vivendo em sociedades verdadeiramente democráticas.

Por ter entendido a natureza política da educacão usou o seu saber de educador, revolucionariamente ousado, não como um fim em si mesmo, mas como uma tática para atingir o que entendia ser realmente fundamental: a libertacão de todas e todos. Assim, compôs uma teoria do conhecimento comprometida com a transformacão da realidade opressiva, uma nova compreensão de educacão, dentro da qual criou um método de alfabetizacão não apenas Para o alfabetizando ler e escrever a palavra mecanicamente, mas para que ele ou ela ao dizer a palavra pronuncie o mundo.

Aprendi, desde cedo, a ver e a sentir em Paulo a retidão de suas intencões, a sua sensibilidade acurada para perceber e atender as aspiracões e os desejos dos outros e das outras. Isso era arender ao seu grande sonho humanista, trac¸ado por ele mesmo para o seu estar sendo no mundo: estar *com* os outros e outras para assim estar *com* o mundo.

Sua inquietacão, indignacão e rebeldia frente ás injustic¸as; sua solidariedade, sua cumplicidade e seu respeito pelos injustic¸ados e oprimidos foram não só sentimentos verdadeiros, mas a leitura política do mundo que, sabiamente, pode fazer para forjar concretamente os seus sonhos. Sonhos que sabia serem necessários e que eram também de muitos. Ofereceu-nos essa leitura não só através de suas palavras plenas de poesia e teoria, mas também porque tinha vivido com aqueles, em comunhão, em sua luta cotidiana. Luta contra a. negacão da possibilidade da vocacão ontológica do *SER MAIS*, como dizia. Comunhão que confirmava a sua crenc¸a e valorizacão dos outros e outras.

Era claro para quem conhecia minimamente Paulo que ele era um homem com grande capacidade de amar, de dar-se, de ser solidário, e generoso. Á essas qualidades do sentir — porque jamais dicotomizou razão de emocão —Paulo juntou sua intuicão acurada, sua inteligéncia brilhante, sua tenacidade em estudar e refletir, sua capacidade de criar e sua vontade esperanc¸osa de mudar o mundo.

Para quem conheceu Paulo como eu conheci, desde crianc¸a como sua amiga, como sua aluna (na escola secundária e no curso de pós-graduacão quando ele foi também meu orientador da dissertacão de mestrado) e depois como sua mulher-companheira, não se espanta com uma Pedagogia do Oprimido, com uma Pedagogia da Esperanc¸a nem com uma Pedagogia da Autonomia. Essas, como todas as outras obras de Paulo, são ele mesmo na essência de seu ser. Suas palavras são, pois, a concretude de sua consciência rigorosa, lúcida, sensível e engajada. São a sua cor, o seu cheiro, o seu toque e o seu olhar. Têm todo o seu corpo porque é ela, a palavra sua, que concretiza a sua obra teórica utópica, a

sua praxis transformadora e a sua capacidade de ser gente. Sáo o seu corpo consciénte grafado no papel com as suas próprias máos.

Seu legado retrata tudo isso. Assim, retrata, em última instáncia, o seu trac˙o mais marcante: a sua generosidade esperanc˙osa como pessoa e como intelectual.

A teoria do conhecimento de Paulo, assim feita por ele, de longa data se refaz, vem sendo recriada e revisitada por estudiosos de várias áreas do conhecimento em todo o mundo. E isso que já o alegrava em vida é fruto dessa sua generosidade. Generosidade, enfim, que se aliou com a humildade de escutar e com a alegria de ver-se completado por outros e outras, *eus* que emergiam e continuam emergindo desse *eu* generoso e esperanc˙oso que ele foi. Generosidade e esperanc˙a que caracterizam a sua compreensáo política de educacáo, pois essa compreensáo se oferece com a grandeza do interesse humanista a todos e todas que a queiram fazer uma acáo cultural para a libertacáo.

Dizer da influéncia ou da presenc˙a de Paulo na minha vida, talvez seja desnecessário. Meus escritos em inúmeros ensaios, artigos, entrevista que concedi, e conferéncias que proferi sobre nossa vida em comum —NITA E PAULO, CRÓNICAS DE AMOR— respondem á essa questáo. Dizem do que estou sentindo, da minha tristeza e do sofrimento por sua auséncia e náo só de minha fidelidade em difundir suas idéias, que substituiram nossa alegria de viver um ao seu lado do outro, amando-nos e cuidando-nos em todos os momentos de nossa vida em comum. Essas coisas dizem mais do que a tentativa de explicitar, racionalmente, a presenc˙a imorredora e a vontade de viver. Aprendi com ele mais do que pedagogia ou filosofia. Aprendi com ele a ler melhor a mim mesma, aos outros e ao mundo, náo porque ele se fizesse um mestre do tudo saber. Ao contrário, porque na sua simplicidade, na sua mansidáo e no seu respeito por mim me ensinou a palavra viva, o gesto amoroso e a possibilidade de mudar sempre. Me ensinou o verdadeiro sentido da generosidade e da esperanc˙a.

A importáncia de Paulo na Minha vida é, portanto absolutamente substantiva. Se náo tivesse vivido esses 10 anos com ele como sua mulher ou mesmo se náo tivesse sido sua aluna ou amiga meu "enderéo" teria, certamente, sido outro.

Ninguém pode vivendo com Paulo passar "impunemente" os seus dias. E vivi *com* ele uma relacáo de marido-mulher que se completou em todas as dimensões dela mesma e das que dessas decorreram.

Ana Maria Araú o Freire (Nita Freire)NA
São Paulo, 15 de setembro de 1998

Privilege, Poverty and Power

Nita's Elegy to Paulo Freire

BY NITA FREIRE
TRANSLATED BY CESAR ROSSATTO

Nita's elegy to Paulo Freire translated by Cesar Rossatto

Paulo was always a charismatic person, insinuative, and fascinating. He was born with these qualities and he knew how to develop them to the extreme.

For this reason I remember him from a most early age, when I was about four years old, and he had just initiated his high school studies at my father's school. Even at that time, he was already an alive and outstanding presence amongst colleagues and teachers of the Osvaldo Cruz School, and most importantly in the midst of my first family.

Paulo always knew how to take advantage of the opportunities that his own personality would open up for him. And he did so with seriousness and caring feelings. The privilege of being able to attend an excellent school removed him from a life of poverty in which he used to live, in the small town of Jaboátao, near the capital city of Recife. Returning to his birthplace to study after a separation caused by his parents' decision to move in a naive attempt to escape the world's capitalist crisis of 1930, Paulo constructed his own life forged in a constant struggle and absolute ethical conduct. Beyond taking advantage of my father's offering to pursue his studies, he fulfilled his dreams of acquiring knowledge, and of applying this knowledge for the service of a political utopia based on his efforts and tenacity, abnegation, and determination.

His ethical seriousness, along with generosity and hope, constitute the most identifiable attributes of Paulo as a human being, qualities that were deeply forged in his childhood and adolescence. Paulo developed power, but a different power than the kind so many struggle for, by using any means, even illicit ones, to "triumph" in this competitive world. Paulo's power was centered on his liberating praxis unconditionally in favor of the oppressed in any form, shape or nature, and not only in the power of his ethical discourse, delivered in well constructed, lucid and adequate words. His power to

learn, to comprehend, to discern, to reflect, to convince, to struggle, to denounce, and to engage was always at the service of his humanistic dream: that all men and women, without exception of color, class, religion or gender, be allowed to participate in constructing and living in a democratic society. Having understood the intrinsic political nature of education, he used his knowledge as an educator, which was audaciously revolutionary, not as an end in itself, but as a tactic to achieve what he understood to be a real fundamental issue: the liberation of all human beings. In this fashion, he composed a theory of knowledge committed toward the transformation of an oppressive reality and a new understanding of education. He created a literacy method which empowers the student to go beyond the mechanical learning of reading and writing so that when they speak the word they pronounce the world.

Since early on, I learned to see and feel in Paulo the righteousness of his intentions, his accurate sensibility to perceive and attend to the aspirations and desires of others. For him this was to attend to his great humanist dream, defined by himself in his being in the world: being with others and in this way being with the world.

His uneasiness, indignation, and rebellion in front of injustice; his solidarity, his complicity and his respect for those that suffer injustice and oppression were not only true and sincere sentiments, but a political reading of the world that, in an act of wisdom, became the vehicle to make his dreams a reality. Dreams that he knew to be necessary and that were also shared by many others. He offered us this reading not only through his words, full of poetry and theory, but also because he had lived in camaraderie with the oppressed in his daily struggle. A struggle against the negation of the possibility of the ontological aspiration to BE MORE, as he used to say. This sense of belonging reaffirmed his beliefs and enhanced the value of others.

It was clear to those who knew Paulo, even minimally, that he was a man with great capacity to love, to give of himself, to be generous, and to show solidarity. To these qualities of feelings — because he never dichotomized reason and emotion — Paulo added his accurate intuition, his brilliant intelligence, his tenacity to study and to reflect, his creativity and his wish and hope to change the world.

To those who knew Paulo as I did since childhood, as a friend, as his student (in secondary school, and in graduate school when he was my advisor for a master degree dissertation) and later as his "mulher-companheira" (wife and comrade), we do not feel frightened by *the Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, nor by *the Pedagogy of Hope*, nor by *a Pedagogy of Autonomy*. These works, as well as all his other works, are Paulo himself. They are the essence of his being. Therefore, his words are the concreteness of his rigorous, lucid, sensitive, and engaged consciousness. They are his colors, his scent, his touch, and his look. They incorporate all of his body because his words are the summation of his theoretical utopian vision, his transformative praxis, and his ability to define himself as a human being. They are his conscious body imprinted on paper by his own hands.

His legacy portrays all of these. In this way, it ultimately portrays his most outstanding character: a generosity tempered by hope as a person and as an intellectual. Paulo's theory of knowledge, created by him in his own way, has been created for a long time, revisited by many scholars from several areas of knowledge all over the world. This, which had already given him joy in life, is a sign of his generosity. Such generosity, thus, was allied with his humility to listen and with the happiness to see himself completed by others. Personalities that had been emerging and continue to emerge out of his generous and hopeful personality. Generosity and hopefulness that characterized his political comprehension of education is being offered with great humanistic interest to all who desire to engage in cultural action for liberation.

To speak about Paulo's influence, or of his presence in my life may not be necessary. My writings in several papers, articles, interviews with the press, presentations at conferences where I have lectured in regard to his theoretical concepts, but above all in the book I wrote about our life together— *"NITA E PAULO, CRONICAS DE AMOR"* (Nita and Paulo, Chronicles of Love) — I answer this question. All of these expressions speak of what I am feeling, of my sadness and suffering for his absence, and not only of my commitment to promote his ideas as a substitute to our happiness to live side by side, loving and caring for each other in all moments of our life together. These things tell more than an attempt on my part to rationally describe the immortal presence and influence of Paulo in my existence today. With Paulo I regained my desire to live. With him I learned more than pedagogy and philosophy. With him I learned how to better read myself, others, and the world. Not because he intended to make himself a master of knowing it all, but on the contrary, in his simplicity, in his gentleness, and in his respect for me, he taught me the eloquence of words, the loving gesture, and the possibility of continuous change. He taught me the true meaning of generosity and hope.

The importance of Paulo in my life is therefore absolutely substantive. If I had not lived with him for ten years as his wife, or even if I had not been his student or friend, my perception of the world would certainly be much different.

Nobody could coexist with Paulo and live his or her days "impunemente" (with impunity). With him I lived a husband-wife relationship that complemented itself in its own dimensions and in all others that evolved from it.

Ana Maria Araújo Freire (Nita Freire),
lover and wife of Paulo Freire
Sao Paulo, September 15, 1998

The bottom of the barrel

by David Keiser

Where dregs of doubt collect like lint on a dark
sweater
I scrape up bits of pride and inhale
I eat the toxic dust of a missed bus and the leftover
dinner
of reheated confidence and chance

I do not know how I got left back
I will repeat the twenty-third grade
I will write across the chalkboard one thousand
times:
I will learn to focus I will learn to focus
I will focus
I will pay attention
I will pay for attention
How much is it on sale?
Can I get attention second hand?

Can I get it from the news?
Can I get it with the blues?
Does it smell like a freezing night?
Is it a light bulb burning bright?

The bottom of the barrel: I feel behind in everything
and the sun
misses me
My mind is an Apple 2E in 1983
My body a Julius Erving slam dunk without in-your-
face funk
My soul recharged like a light bulb lit by a battery
a wire and six year-old hands

Jack of all trades, master of none
I want to trade my jack for a queen: a queen bee to
make me some honey
to use my workers efficiently
and to keep flower petals smelling sweet

I want to learn to file my head away in the shade and
go meet the breeze
I want to surf the bamboo forests and climb the
raging rivers and
awake near rain and fire
I want to burn my file cabinet my coursework class
lists resumes vitae
bills checks
stubs clips old books and mail, my entire computer
system and I might
even burn
my old clothes my syllabi my teaching tools my ten year
old ideas my rage
my naiveté and my faith

I want to burn my faith to roll it and
smoke it up pollute the air with my good will and
sharing
caring for others unlike me

We would I believe get stoned from my ashes
my years of good intention
White guilt fine like the powder on slopes/in noses
potent like ammonia and
hard like a cracked green coconut laced with white
meat and sweet water

I want to list what makes me scream
to purge my paper of greased diseased pollution
and toxic doublespeak
I want to shut off my ears and eyes and go inside
to where cells make sense

There is nothing/there is nothing we can do
so we do nothing

and here, in Starbucks, sitting on chairs I cannot afford
with people I do not know

and here, in Bay Area bathrooms soiled with white
power graffiti
and middle class beggars on Haight and Telegraph

I laugh at myself
for thinking
I make a difference

David Keiser is a Doctoral Student in the School of Education at University of California at Berkeley.

The Paulo Freire Democratic Project

By Penny Bryan and Tom C. Wilson

Nita Freire and the Democratic Wall, AERA Symposium, "Paulo Freire: Memory, Remembrance and Action." April, 1998, San Diego, California.

The essence of Paulo Freire's pedagogy consists of reading, reflection and action. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1997) he writes that reflection without action becomes mere "verbalism," and that action without reflection becomes "activism" (p. 68). The question then becomes: how can reflection and action directed toward a critical democratic culture manifest themselves in a formal, university school of education setting? An embryonic yet hopefully instructive answer is found in the current efforts underway at the School of Education (SOE), Chapman University in Orange, California.

For almost ten years, there has been an office of the Institute for Democratic Education (IDE) in southern California, first at the University of California, Irvine, then at Chapman. Within the past five years or so, the SOE has faced the problem of integrating democratic and critical thought within the teacher, administration, special education credential and the Masters in Education programs. Such efforts have included: (a) collaboration with local schools struggling to develop critical, democratic cultures; (b) the formation of CARDC (Collaborative Action Researchers for Democratic Communities), which brought together the IDE office and a group of teacher researchers to form a new participatory teacher research group dedicated to the development of critical democracy; (c) membership in the University of Pennsylvania Penn Literacy Network; (d) the development of a Family Literacy Project; (e) the Emerging Democracy project, whose first steps have been the generation of democratic dialogue and collaborative work with educators from St. Petersburg, Moscow, and Kursk, Russia; and (f) the securing of a $1,000,000 endowment for critical literacy work. Within the past several years these activities have coalesced within a program now titled the Paulo Freire Democratic Project (PFDP)). One major and recent endeavor of the PFDP has been the organization and implementation of a featured symposium at the annual meeting of the American Education Research Association, April, 1998, which became a microcosm of much of the essence of the PFDP. It is an explanation of the PFDP and the AERA symposium to which this writing now turns. The first section, written primarily by Tom Wilson, offers somewhat *formally* the core beliefs, the common principles of the PFDP. The second portion, developed for the most part by Penny Bryan, describes more *informally* the AERA symposium and its linkage to PFDP core beliefs in terms of both spirit and practice.

PFDP Core Beliefs Common Principles

In February, 1996, Paulo gave his permission for the Project to use his name and encouraged its further development. To date, beyond the AERA symposium, the following activities have occurred: (1) the nomination and awarding of an honorary doctorate to Paulo Freire; (2) the creation of a life size bust placed on the campus; (3) a two day conference at which the PFDP was officially inaugurated; and (4) the guest editing of this edition of *Democracy and Education* celebrating Paulo's work.

Each of these beginning functions help us become clearer about, as Paulo wrote in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, our own ontological vocations. The Paulo Freire Democratic Project's vocation, broadly stated, is *to bring to bear a synthesis of progressive/critical and ethical/democratic practices upon both formal and informal educational contexts*. To accomplish this mission, PFDP gathers together a number of constituencies with educational functions to promote the full democratic, intellectual and critical development of students, teachers, administrators, parents and other community members. PFDP is characterized by a number of beliefs:

1. Drawing from John Dewey, democracy and ethics are seen in symbiotic relationship. He made the connection between ethics, the individual, and democracy over 100 years ago when he wrote ". . .democracy is an ethical idea of a personality, with truly

infinite capacities, incorporate with every man. Democracy and the one, the ultimate ethical ideal of humanity are to my mind synonyms" (1969, 1888, p. 248).

2. Literacy is a process by which human agents come to know and act upon their world. In this manner, PFDP rejects a narrow conceptualization of literacy characterized by reading and writing," . . in page-bound, official, standard forms of the national language . . . restricted to formalized, monolingual, monocultural, and rule-governed forms of language" (New London Group, 1996, p. 61). Rather, PFDP conceives of literacy, or perhaps better as the New London Group proposes *multiliteracy*, as a process that broadens to take into account (1) the increasing diversity, pluralism, and multiplicity of cultures, voices, and orientations desiring, if not demanding, to be heard and included, and (2) the proliferation of examination of the complex relationships between this proliferation of literacy forms beyond the "page-bound" and issues of cultural, linguistic, racial, class, and gender differences becomes a significant focus of PFDP activities. When we become multi literate, we become critically conscious through our reading of, reflecting upon, and acting within the world.

3. All educational processes should be directed toward human development in its broadest meaning. Development means the realization of individual potential in intellectual, linguistic, personal, interpersonal, social, aesthetic, moral and critical domains in order to have individuals become the best they can be. Development views intelligence as a socially constructed and multifaceted process (Gardner, 1983), not limited by background or current circumstances, or as a fixed entity randomly distributed in the population. Education focuses to bring all involved to ways of knowing (Eisner, 1985), regardless of gender, racial, cultural, ethnic and class backgrounds. Thus, ALL participants are perceived as intellectuals and moral philosophers who can construct complex, meaningful, rich, and ethical knowledge and competencies directed toward fair and ". . . equitable social participation. . ." (New London Group, 1996, p. 60). Thus, in this sense, the idea of human development is an expansive one, it is not one of self-centeredness, of competitive, neoliberal individualism, of "selfishness and egoism" (Miller, 1979, p. 5). It is rather one of *individuality*, it is ". . . what Marx and Hegel might have called a social individuality . . . (in which) . . . the capacity for mutual recognition and individuality is inherently relational (Gilbert, 1990, p. 2).

From this then, the Project understands education as much more than schooling. While major focus is directed to the schools, significant attention is paid to community groups with educational and liberatory functions. Democracy is in the lived, cultural experience of people and therefore cannot and should not be left to the schools alone.

4. The creation of democratic culture is the essential mission of the project and is directly related to our beliefs concerning human development. Democratic society relies upon the deep engagement of effective citizens characterized by responsibility, knowledge, thoughtfulness, and ethical sensibility. In no way does this emphasis ignore the promotion of academic rigor and excellence. Yet while absolutely necessary, the intellect alone is not sufficient in and of itself for the full realization of individual development and democratic culture. An intellectual emphasis is justified only to the extent that it contributes to the development of critically competent individuals committed to active participation in democratic culture.

5. Our efforts are essentially political and thereby moral. Human development and the promotion of multiliteracies and democratic, critical literacy and culture are normative matters pertaining to what educational practices both ought to do and that which is currently underway. The "ought" informs the necessity of a morality of decontextualized universal rights, while the "is" concentrates on the present in terms of context, relationships, and avoiding hurt (Gilligan, 1998). Both the is and the ought, saturated as they are with questions of power and authority, thereby become political. Thus, far from claiming any value neutrality - an impossibility - PFDP grounds itself in both a rights and a care based critical morality.

6. Since we view our efforts as primarily moral and political, we cannot deny their interrelationships with economics. An expansive concept of human development and democratic education requires from educators, students and community members the capacity to critically analyze the impact of capitalism, markets, and globalization upon themselves. It is naive, we believe, to assume that the local school and even classroom levels are unaffected by such economic concerns. Carnoy (1998, p. 9) enforces this conclusion:

> National (and local) politics today is increasingly constrained to shaping the culture of global capitalism as it is manifested nationally and locally. Economic globalization means the globalization of local social movements. Local politics means the localization of global capitalism. Local becomes global and global becomes local.

7. Our work is essentially aesthetic; we do beautiful things. The inclusion of the aesthetic brings to consciousness a vital factor largely ignored in literacy programs and in school and community change practices. We see the aesthetic as concretized through the arts, through the senses, as a means to help us see how we do things anew. We accept the arts as essential reflective devices to provide us the ". . .capacity. . .to restructure conventional patterns of meaning" (Held, 1980, p. 83). And beyond providing us a way to look at our own work through forms of beautiful expression such as harmony, style, patterns, quality, coherence, dissonance, oppositions and sensuousness, the aesthetic offers a means to conceptualize what might be a beautiful person, a

beautiful school, a beautiful community." Art probably cannot provide us with ". . .in any clear fashion an ideal reality, but . . . it presents the existent as a beautiful reality" (Held, 1980, p. 85). Thus, the aesthetic becomes a form of criticism. To envision a beautiful reality implies a certain ugliness in current, accepted reality, and since ugliness cannot be "technocratized" away, we need the ". . .'aesthetic dimension' as a domain of emancipatory experience. . . (that poses us) . . . against and beyond established consciousness" (Bronner and Kellner, 1989, p. 12). While referring specifically to poetry and literature, Faatz's (1994, p. 916) belief captures our own: ". . . the task . . . is to challenge us, to illuminate our world and our lives, to force us to examine that which we take for granted and to act in solidarity for something new, to 'give name to the nameless so it can be thought.'."

8. Our work is reflective in practice. Critical to our success are questioning and reflection. The assumption is that the tensions within both the "ought" and the "is's" will not be resolved by accepting at face value our beliefs about educational practice. Rather, we will foster strong dialogue about that which we take for granted; we will strive to make the familiar strange and the strange familiar. In short, we recognize that a democratic literacy must include educational literacy, the ability and the capacity to be critical of what we read, see, and hear about education and to probe beyond surface appearances and conventional wisdom. This approach recognizes the interconnections between the problems of society and how they mutually affect each other. Thus, the PFDP reaches out for pedagogical engagement with other communities concerned with democracy and justice. It is as Leistyna (1994, p. 224) writes, when reviewing Henry Giroux's *Border Crossings*, that such a pedagogy is a ". . .configuration of textual, verbal, and visual practices that seek to engage the processes through which people understand themselves and the ways in which they engage others and their environment." Our reflection therefore is more than "critique and demystification" for it "allows us, from our mutual locations, to analyze ourselves and society and decide how we will define and subsequently live our lives." It is through this sort of reflective practice that we will continually probe ways by which our work can be made adequate to a changing demographic, political, economic and ideological world.

9. Essential to the Project's purpose is the inclusion of participatory and collaborative modes of research honored for their empowering potential by which individuals become actively engaged as researchers of their own conditions (Connell, 1993; Horton, 1990; Freire, 1981; Hurst, 1998). The premise is that people gain knowledge about social and educational reality through analysis of their own lived situations through their own investigation and not by relying on expert, external knowledge created for purposes foreign to their common interests. Thus, participatory research seeks two major objectives:

a. To benefit educational communities in direct and tangible ways
b. To involve the members of those communities as significant participants in the research process.

Both quantitative and qualitative methods are used in participatory research, yet their use grows from the questions asked by members of the particular community. In this manner, participatory research becomes essential for educational transformation and at the same time, transforming education informs research. Thus, both research and learning became interactive and the distinction between the two grows dim.

10. We remain always hopeful. We recognize the enormity of the critical and moral task, yet not to struggle surrenders us to a fatalism, to a denial of our own efficacy as makers of history. It is through action and hope that we work on our own incompleteness. Freire (1998, p. 69) states this absolute necessity:

> In truth, from the point of view of the human condition, hope is an essential component and not an intruder. It would be a serious contradiction of what we are if, aware of our unfinishedness, we were not disposed to participate in a constant movement of search, which in its very nature is an expression of joy. Hope is natural, possible, and necessary impetus in the context of our unfinishedness. Hope is an indispensable seasoning in our human, historical experience. Without it, instead of history we would have a pure determinism. History only exists where time is problematized and not simply a given. A future that is inexorable is a denial of history.

Based upon these ten beliefs, we now see the PFDP as incorporating our past efforts as an office of IDE. We remain that but have renamed ourselves to honor and bring together in a consciousness way the work of IDE and Paulo Freire. Within the School of Education, the PFDP plays an important touchstone role in making the ideals of its mission and vision statements operational across levels of program and process implementation. Guided by open inquiry and affirmation of diversity, PFDP co-constructs the kind of authentic education necessary for sustaining moral and democratic processes for the transformation of ourselves, our schools and our communities. Critical learners-as-teachers of all ages and from many places are welcome.

American Education Research Association Symposium

What we linked . . .

At the beginning of this paper, we identified the PFDP mission or vocation, "*to bring to bear a synthesis of progressive [critical and ethical] democratic practices upon both formal and informal educational contexts.*" While other institutions of higher education would center upon archival custodianship of Freire's writings, we would focus upon actions and recreations of these ideas in the world. We would embody and support critical praxis (action and reflection) in

ourselves, our own community and in democratic linkages with others.

When Paulo Freire died unexpectedly we were in the planning stages of a celebration surrounding his acceptance of an honorary doctorate degree from Chapman University. In the fall, he was to receive the degree in person. An original bronze bust of his likeness done by a local artist, Miriam Looder, would be unveiled as a permanent sculpture on the home campus. In partnership with him, we were planning a small dialogic conference as the initial activity of the Institute.

We were shaken by his death and the loss of his corporeal presence in the world. We wanted to *do* something, *create* some active and aesthetic tribute that would *honor* his life, his work and *continue* the impact he has had on each of us. About this time, we received notice from the American Educational Research Association (AERA) that proposals for sessions at the April 1998 conference, "Diversity and Citizenship in Multicultural Societies," were due August 1, 1997. The description of the conference theme included:

> . . .the increasing recognition and diversity within the United States has increased equity and human rights and given many groups on the margins of society the opportunity to participate in the mainstream and to more fully realize their hopes, dreams and possibilities. However the gap between rich and poor continues to escalate, and many citizens remain structurally excluded from mainstream American society. The expression and legitimization of diversity is also challenging established epistemologies, research paradigms, institutionalized practices, and the center of society itself. Issues concerning the distribution of power and wealth, human rights, and what it means to be an American citizen are being articulated (Annual Program, p. 9).

We made an "aha" connection for PFDP that resulted in the submission of an AERA proposal unlike any that we have ever experienced, or know of, at this international educational research organization. We knew that accomplished, critical scholars would be presenting sessions based upon Paulo's work. And indeed, there was a powerful session prior to ours which evoked strong images and emotions around this extraordinary man and his ideas by some of those who had worked with him and loved him deeply.

For our session entitled, "Paulo Freire: Memory, Remembrance and Action," we purposely chose a very different format. We felt it necessary to provide an opportunity for a wide range of community voices to speak. This idea was affirmed by PFDP common principle #3, *"All* **participants are perceived as intellectuals and moral philosophers who can construct complex, meaningful, rich and ethical knowledge and competencies** . . . " Much to our delight, we were selected as a featured session for the AERA Conference, Division G, Social Context of Education (Annual Program, pp. 19 & 221).

What we planned . . .

The session was listed as an "Interactive Symposium," but the program definition only partially described what occurred. We did anticipate considerable time for large and small group dialogue, but bearing witness, cutting, pasting and painting a democracy wall were very different "academic" activities. The agenda planning was developed collaboratively by a group of us, representing faculty, staff and graduate students (See Special Acknowledgment-endnote).

Our vision was for broad participation with other groups and institutions. It was to be an inclusive event, sponsored by Chapman University School of Education. Ana Maria Araújo "Nita" Freire, Paulo's widow and a scholar in her own right agreed to participate. Arrangements were made for Donaldo Macedo, University of Massachusetts, Boston, to translate for Nita. Raul Magaña, Universidad Compluten SE de Madrid, João Pinto, University of Texas, El Paso, and Nita agreed to present their work with Paulo on their forthcoming book, *Pedagogy of Health*. Critical scholars Maxine Greene and Peter McLaren agreed to join us. Further collaboration came from the Critical Pedagogy Institute of the California Association of Bilingual Education, CARDC (a Chapman teacher research group), and the school of Education, California State University, Fullerton. A cadre of SOE graduate students, SOE and other non-Chapman faculty, and several school administrators also volunteered to become small group conveners or "witnesses" at the symposium.

For the Institute this would be the first " . . . **bringing together a number of constituencies with educational functions to promote the full democratic, intellectual and critical development of students, teachers, administrators, parents and other community members.**" The intended agenda followed our session title, "Paulo Freire: Memory, Remembrance and Action." Following is the brief introduction and overview:

1. *Memory:* To have going a videotape of Paulo in dialogue as people gathered, to introduce and acknowledge Nita Freire, followed by a dialogue between Nita Freire and the authors of the *Pedagogy of Health*. Donaldo Machedo would translate.

2. *Remembrance:* To have Chapman participants and others come to the microphone and bear witness to their memories and remembrance of Paulo Freire and his impact upon them.

3. *Action*: To divide into small groups as "cultural circles," each led by a witness. The groups would dialogue as they constructed a section of a "democracy wall mural," honoring Freire's life and work. At the end of the session we would build the wall, looking for meaningful connections and juxtapositions as we put the sections together. We would bring poster board, magazines and art supplies to construct the wall. The inspiration came from a community murals process, designed and developed by Judy Baca, School of Fine and Performing Arts, University of California, Irvine. Paulo had observed and delighted in the creation of a

similar, participant generated mural at Irvine when he visited in March, 1986.

4. *Reflection*: Those appointed as "ethnographers" would reflect upon the symposium, the small group dialogues and aesthetic representations of democracy. These observations then would be presented to the entire assembly.

5. *Celebration*: We know that Paulo Freire loved people, friendship, music and food. He once stated, "I never really trust anyone who doesn't love to eat." We therefore decided that it would be appropriate to end the session by moving into a social reception with food and drink.

What actually happened . . .

What actually happened exceeded our expectations! Just before the Conference, the Dean of the School of Education found out that he would be unable to attend because of a family priority. He wrote an eloquent piece on critical pedagogy and its place in our School of Education. It made a wonderful handout and SOE artifact, "naming" who we are to ourselves and for others.

Someone commented that a session with this format " . . . was certainly a first in my experience for this research organization and it's about time. . ." which hopefully might shift the AERA posture, if ever so slightly. What stood out was the active engagement from a wider range of "diversity and citizenship in multicultural societies" than we had imagined. The authenticity of the voices reflected breadth and difference regarding age, race, class, gender, geography and language. The aesthetics of the experience provided a unity, as the whole audience passionately expressed the effect of this man's words and work upon their own.

Some unintended and splendid voices contributed to the powerful whole of the experience that day. Nita Freire, when asked to say what was on her mind, stated that his was a surprise and a moment of great emotion; to speak and remember how she and Paulo had lived together with such love and intensity. She spoke eloquently about never dichotomizing emotion and thinking, and poignantly about life as experienced through the body. "The body is where everything takes place, thoughts, feelings, tastes." Its pleasure and love are denied with the incredible disease, AIDS. Health education cannot be banking education, but "must follow the Freirian dialogical model, instead of prescriptions.

Conscientization comes from inside; we can move from a construct within ourselves to a dialogue with others about how we think and know and feel and what path we should take." She then spoke of her daily life with Paulo and the importance of the small and intimate touch and senses as a way of knowing and being in the world. " . . . For ten years we lived together, lived fully this possibility . . . we did not allow anything to come between us."

Paulo, Raul Magaña (who was unable to physically attend the conference), Nita Freire, and Joao Pinto, were again cited as the authors of the forthcoming book, *Pedagogy of Health*. João introduced a videotape of Paulo in dialogue with scholars assembled to discuss how to use Freirian pedagogy in health education regarding AIDS. Raul, on the tape said, "Having knowledge is not enough; in praxis, you have to do something."

Following the tape, twelve people chose to bear witness publicly to their remembrance of Freire. They exemplified the conference theme, "Diversity and Citizenship in Multicultural Societies." They represented six countries: different regions of the US, Portugal, Brazil, South Africa, Chile and Canada. Some spoke of direct memories; others described the influence of his words, sometimes forbidden, upon their lives. Grand themes of love and compassion were juxtaposed to personal and humorous narrative accounts:

Author and professor Joan Wink spoke of meeting Paulo with her daughter Dawn. "After speaking to a very large group, those in charge were trying to move crowds along. He said, "The line will stay and I will visit." He shook hands and spoke individually to every person."

Emily Wolk, a Chapman graduate and bilingual teacher, spoke of seeing him deliberately move the podium which he found to be a hindrance between him and the audience before he spoke at the University of Nebraska, and that, ever since, she has been trying to "move the podium in her own school, classroom and community."

The final witness was the professor and social philosopher, Maxine Greene. "I had such awe of him as a man of the people." She recalled her meetings with him, including a luncheon with Nita's ten year old grandson. "He was trying to ask a question, and us adult hotshots were drowning him out. Paulo quieted us saying that whenever you ignore a person's question, you dehumanize him." She also reminded us that he was a great scholar, "introducing many of us to existentialism and phenomenology. He was both a social activist and great intellect. He showed us many ways to infuse ideas in our actions."

We experienced PFDP common principle #4: *"Our work is essentially aesthetic; we do beautiful things."* We added a commemorative poster, illustrated brochure, Brazilian folk music, and performance of an original poem in two voices, collaboratively written by faculty member Jan Osborn and administrator Bobby Fisher. It was inspired by Chinese dissident Wei Jinsheng's book, *The Courage to Stand Alone: Letters from Prison & Other Writings*. In 1979, he was shipped to prison for 15 years for doing no more than advocating for democracy and human rights through posting his arguments, along with many others, on a wall in Beijing. Centered in Beijing, and initially not stopped by the police, such postings moved to other cities and became known as the "Democracy Wall Movement." However, after Deng Xiaoping had consolidated his power and no longer needed to appeal to mass opinion for support against Maoist holdovers, he moved to repress the Democracy Wall movement and make an example of Wei Jingshen to emphasize that he, Deng, was not abandoning

the authoritarian political system.

Although released briefly in 1993, Wei was returned to prison where he remained under another sentence of 14 years. Subsequently, he was released and now lived in the United States. His reflections, his emotional "archeology", and his actions are captured in his book. While we have no way of knowing if he has ever heard of Paulo Freire, his courage, his tenacity, his gentleness, his identification with the oppressed, and his deep rooted belief in justice speak to a rich and powerful congruence. In 1983, Wei writes to Deng in criticism (Binyan, 1997, p. 14):

> After all, even if you have only the slightest sense of justice, when you come across something that you absolutely cannot tolerate, then you must get involved. . . (not to do so) is an irresponsible act of cowardice both to oneself and to society.

To paraphrase Maxine Greene's description of Paulo, unless we can imagine a lovelier future, there is no pedagogy of hope. Their use of poetic language, performed in two voices, to recall this inequity and call for democracy was powerful. It challenged us to envision a lovelier future, one that Maxine Greene connected to her passion for "social imagination." From PFDP common principle #5, ". . . the aesthetic becomes a form of criticism . . . aesthetic dimension as a domain of emancipatory experience (that poses us) against and beyond established consciousness." The poem situated a democracy wall for us as both a global, local, historic and contemporary critical signifier as well as an essential component of the symposium. When coauthor Jan Osborne couldn't come to the session, another faculty member, Suzanne SooHoo, read her part.

The final action part of the session was building the democracy wall. We regrouped in small cultural circles. The paste and scissors came out in the elegant ballroom, small groups were formed by the witnesses, and participants gathered for the most part on the floor. While some people left at this juncture, a sizable number of "knowers and constructors" were everyone present, "reading the world and reading the word" in transactions with the material and each other crafted as visual codifications of democracy.

At the end, the wall that we assembled was an aesthetic and representational naming and framing of our collective memory, remembrance and action, honoring Paulo Freire and his ideas. It was also cathartic. Someone commented that it was healing to be able to do something together to help us deal with the loss of his presence.

The formally "appointed" ethnographers, Emily Wolk and Peter McLaren, took notes as the small groups talked and worked on sections of the democracy wall. Their summary comments really captured the essence of our purpose, its intentions, rich actualization and public reflection.

Emily said that as an elementary school teacher, seeing all these university folks on their hands and knees with scissors, paste and paper was absolutely delightful. She led us in applauding ourselves. She also recalled hearing Paulo say at another conference that time can be an oppressor. She commented upon the "frenzied work" she saw in the small groups as they tried to make something valuable and democratic under the constraint of time. It reminded her of the same "frenzied" pace as teachers try to do meaningful work and make similar changes in schools. She also noted the apparent pleasure people took in coming together to talk about their thoughts of Paulo's work.

Someone spoke of his experience with Freire's work as being in isolation up to this time. It was a great pleasure to be in community and share these feelings with others. She felt that "it helps us interpret and understand the work of Paulo Freire, "el mundo es el salon de clase," the world is the classroom."

Peter Mc Laren reflected, " . . . what I found quite interesting was, here are educators, taking the detritus of capitalism, words from advertising publications, corporate commodities and defetishizing them and producing signs and significations of liberation. WOW!" He then continued:

> . . . in reacting to what has happened in the building of the democracy wall, I can summarize my feelings in one brief thought and here it is. Paulo Freire lives in our public and private thoughts, in our voices, our hearts and dreaming the world anew. You can't see the world clearly if your heart is out of focus. Paulo's life and work is the lens that focuses our own hearts to see clearly what needs to be done to make the world a more loving and just place. Estato siempre. Thank you.

What we hope . . .

The two ethnographers, one teacher-as-researcher and one university professor-as-researcher, had eloquently summarized the session, its confluence of unity, diversity and multiple perspectives. After these reflections, the individual small group/cultural circles' visual codifications were posted together and became a large collage democratic wall. The entire assembly then retired to a social reception with beans, rice, cornbread, libations, Brazilian music and continuing conversation.

The entire program was a powerful experience for those who participated and as a significant activity of the Paulo Freire Democratic Project. In coming together to dialogue *and* do something authentic at an international research conference, we hope that we moved toward a vision of a more democratic world and for, to repeat Peter McLaren's words at the symposium, ". . . our own hearts to see (more) clearly what needs to be done to make the world a more loving and just place." The symposium, as we see it, then indeed became a microcosm, a encompassing spirit of the possible, of our dreams for ourselves made real and "wide awake" in the emerging Paulo Freire Democratic Project.

In closing, while fully conscious of the enormity of the task, PFDP remains anchored in a reality guided by Freire's

Pedagogy of Hope (1994) which pays attention to the small, artful nuances of everyday life. Gibboney (1994, p. 224) says it convincingly:

> Let us take advantage of the relative quiet and stability a no-reform condition brings, and pay attention to those "little things" in ordinary experience that have the power to shape us. Tolstoy tells the story of a painter who corrected a student's work. "Why, you only touched it a tiny bit." The student exclaimed, "but it is quite a different thing." The teacher replied: "Art begins where the tiny bit begins." Tolstoy then draws his moral in honor of the prosaic experience in life. "One may say that true life begins where the tiny bit begins, where what seems to us minute and infinitely small, alterations take place. True life is not lived where great external changes take place, where people move about, clash, fight, and slay one another, it is lived only where these tiny, tiny, infinitesimally small changes occur."

The PFDP will artfully do "what it can where it is" while remaining always mindful that its "ordinary" experiences will crystallize into a liberatory, ontological vocation having influence beyond its immediate form.

Acknowledgments

To all of those who helped plan and participate in the session in no particular order: Tom Wilson, Penny Bryan, Suzanne SooHoo, Tina Montemare, Bobbi Fisher, Jan Osborn, Susie Weston-Barajas, Dawn Hunter, Rosemary Fahey, Jim Brown, Chris Byron, Cheryl Armon, Teri Egan, Amy Fann, Mike Stuckhart, Marsha Thicksten, Mindy Manos, Kim Chavez, Stacey Duff, Cathie Abdel-Massih, Nancy Mallotte, Laura Stinchfield, Rima Mulokas, Lauren Ellis, Aling Chan, Tom Tracy, Dee Dee Carr, Lani Martin, Emily Wolk, Ana Maria Araujo "Nita" Freire, Maxine Greene, Peter McClaren, Joao Pinto, Donaldo Macedo, Joan Wink, Jean Frederickson, Cheryl King, and Paulo.

Penny Bryan is an Assistant Professor in the School of Education at Chapman University in Orange, California.

References

Annual Conference Program (1998). Washington, DC: American Education Research Association.

Binyan, L. (1997). Living in truth. *[Review of The courage to stand alone: Letters from prison and other writings].* (P. Link, trans.) *New York Review of Books, XLIV,* (12), 12-160.

Bronner, Stephan and Douglas Kellner (eds.). (1989). *Critical theory and society: A reader.* New York: Routledge.

Carnoy, Martin. (1998). Forward in P. Freire, *Pedagogy of the heart* (pp. 9- 19). New York: Continuum.

Connell, Robert. (1993). *Schools and social justice.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Dewey, John. (1969, 1888). "The Ethics of democracy." *The early works of John Dewey.* 1882-1898. Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 227-249.

Eisner, Elliot (ed.) (1985). "Learning and teaching the ways of knowing." *Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education,* 84th ed., Part II. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Faatz, Chris. (1994). "The independent eye." *The Nation.* 258 (25). June 27, 916.

Freire, Paulo. (1981). *Education for critical consciousness.* New York: Continuum.

Freire, Paulo. (1994). *Pedagogy of hope.* New York: Continuum.

Freire, Paulo. (1998). *Pedagogy of freedom: Ethics, democracy, and civic courage.* Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Gardner, Howard. (1983). *Frames of mind: A theory of multiple intelligence .* New York: Basic Books.

Gibboney, Richard. (1994). The stone trumpet: *A story of practical school reform 1960- 1990.* Albany: State University of New York Press.

Gilbert, Alan. (1990). *Democratic individuality.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Gilligan, Carol. (1998). Remembering Larry. Journal of *Moral Education.* 27 (2), 125- 140.

Held, David. (1980). *Introduction to critical theory: Horkheimer to Habermas.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Horton, Myles. 0). *The long haul: An autobiography.* (with Judith and Herbert Kohl). New York: Doubleday.

Hurst, John. (Compiler), (1998, March). *Electronic resources for popular education and participatory research.* (Available from John Hurst, School of Education, University of California, Berkeley, California.

Jingsheng, Wei. (1997). The courage *to stand alone: Letters from prison and other writings. New York:* Penguin.

Leistyna, Pepi. (1994). "Editor's review." *Harvard Educational Review. 64 (2), Summer,* 222-227.

Miller, James. (1979). History and *human existence: From Marx to Merleau-Ponty. Berkeley:* University of California Press. New London G roup. (1996).

"A Pedagogy of multiliteracies." *Harvard Educational Review.* 66 (1), Spring, 60-92.

the courage to stand alone

a found poem

for two voices

By Bobbi Fisher and Jan Osborn

from *The Courage to Stand Alone: Letters from Prison and other Writings* by Wei Jingsheng

This poem is to be read aloud by two readers at once, one taking the left-hand part, the other the right-hand part. Words are read simultaneously that appear on the same line.

Wei

Jingsheng

Democracy Wall Movement

Democracy Wall Movement

Wei

Rancid China prison cell

Wei Jingsheng

The prison letters

Wei Jingsheng

Defiant letters

Eloquent letters

Tyranny

Tyranny

Inhumanity

Human rights

Political Prisoner

Performance art

Propaganda

Living tableau

Demanding Democracy

Demanding Democracy

Victim

Victor

suffering
physical and mental
depression
refusing to die
heart weakens
depression
Refusing to die
Refusing to die

suffering
physical and mental
depression
refusing to die
heart weakens
depression
Refusing to die

Foolish old man

Moves mountains alone

Acting
Victim?
Cause taken up

Suffering
Cause celebre?

Amnesty International
Human Rights Watch

China tarnished?

China's reputation improves

Slowly

Slowly

International Attention
Government inconvenienced

International Attention

No pardon for Wei

Pressure intensifies

Stupid as ever?
Wei well known

Democratic movement regroups

Cannot shut Wei up

Cannot kill Wei
New laws

Another humiliation

For Democracy

He survives
Democracy Wall

Of popular feeling
Democracy Wall

People were needed

responsibility

He stood alone

Can we learn?

government inconvenienced

Jingsheng

Pressure intensifies

Nominated Nobel Peace Prize

Clever as ever?

At home and abroad

Democratic movement regroups

Cannot shut Wei up

Cannot kill Wei

New trial

Another humiliation

For Democracy

International symbol

He survives

Movement
Outpouring

Democracy Wall

leadership

He stood alone

Can we learn?

This original poem in two voices was inspired by Chinese dissident Wei Jinsheng's book, *The Courage to Stand Alone: Letters from Prison & Other Writings*. In 1983, Wei writes to Chairman Deng Xiaoping in criticism:

> After all, even if you have only the slightest sense of justice, when you come across something that you absolutely cannot tolerate, then you must get involved ... (not to do so) is an irresponsible act of cowardice both to oneself and to society.

While we have no way of knowing if he has even heard of Paulo Freire, Jingsheng's courage, his tenacity, his gentleness, his identification with the oppressed, and his deep-rooted belief in justice speak to a rich and powerful congruence. The poem was read at the invited symposium, "Paulo Freire: Memory, Remembrance, and Action" at the American Education Research Association Annual Meeting, San Diego, 1998.

Jingsheng, Wei. *The Courage to Stand Alone: Letters from Prison and Other Writings*, New York: Penquin Books, 1997.

Bobbi Fisher is Director of the Reading Center of the School of Education at Chapman University in Orange, California.

Jan Osborn is a lecturer in the School of Educationand the School of Communication Arts at Chapman University in Orange, California.

essay

The Revolutionary Legacy of Paulo Freire

by Peter McLaren and Valerie Scatamburlo

The emotion of hope goes out of itself, makes people broad instead of confining them . . . The work of this emotion requires people who throw themselves actively into what is becoming . . . Hopelessness is itself, in a temporal and factual sense, the most insupportable thing, downright intolerable to human needs.

— Ernst Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*

I could never think of education without love and that is why I think I am an educator, first of all because I feel love . . .

— Paulo Freire

Paulo Reglus Neves Freire uttered these words to a friend just days before his untimely death on May 2, 1997. This tragic loss has robbed us of one of the most radical, politically engaged, public intellectuals of our time, but this tragedy cannot rob us of his legacy nor can it diminish the promise and insight's of his life's work. With every line Freire's writings emanate a spirit, a sense of urgency, and an intensity which is as rare as it is refreshing. He was a passionate pedagogue and activist — someone who took the theory/praxis nexus seriously, someone who was engaged in struggle all his life, someone who was much more than an armchair academic.

As a courageous scholar and cultural worker, Freire was able to develop an anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist literacy praxis that served as the foundation for a more broadly based struggle for liberation. Freire's internationally celebrated work with the poor began in the 1940s and continued unabated until 1964 when a right-wing military coup

With every line, Freire's writings emanate a spirit, a sense of urgency, and an intensity which is as rare as it is refreshing. He was a passionate pedagogue and activist — someone who took the theory/praxis nexus seriously, someone who was engaged in struggle all his life, someone who was much more than an armchair academic.

overthrew the democratically elected government of President Joao Goulart. Freire was accused of preaching communism and arrested. He was imprisoned by the military government for seventy days and exiled for his work in the national literacy campaign of which he had served as director. According to Moacir Gadotti (1994), the Brazilian military considered Freire an "international subversive," "a traitor to Christ and the Brazilian people," and accused him of developing a teaching method "similar to that of Stalin, Hitler, Peron, and Mussolini." He was further accused of trying to turn Brazil into a "bolshevik" country.

Freire's sixteen years of exile were tumultuous and productive times: a five-year stay in Chile as a UNESCO consultant with the Research and Training Institute for Agrarian Reform; an appointment in 1969 to Harvard University's Center for Studies in Development and Social Change; a move to Geneva, Switzerland in 1970 as consultant to the Office of Education of the World Council of Churches where he developed literacy programs for Tanzania and Guinea-Bissau that focused on the re-Africanization of their countries; the development of literacy programs in some post-revolutionary former Portuguese colonies such as Angola and Mozambique; assisting the governments of Peru and Nicaragua with their literacy campaigns; the establishment of the Institute of Cultural Action in Geneva in 1971; a brief return to Chile after Salvador Allende was assassinated in 1973, provoking General Pinochet to declare Freire a dangerous subversive; a summer stint at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education in 1975; and his brief visit to Brazil under a political amnesty in 1979 before his final return to Brazil in 1980 to teach at the Pontifica Universidade Natolica Sao Paulo and the Universidade de Campinas in Sao Paulo. These events were accompanied by numerous works, most notably *Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Cultural Action for Freedom and Pedagogy in Process: Letter to Guinea-Bissau.* In more recent years, Freire worked briefly as Secretary of Education of Sao Paulo, continuing his radical agenda of literacy reform for the people of that city. Freire's literacy programs for disempowered peasants are now employed in countries all over the world. In fact, Freire was preparing for a trip to Cuba to receive an award from Fidel Castro for his pedagogical efforts and accomplishments when he passed away.

By linking the categories of history, politics, economics, and class to the

concepts of culture and power, Freire managed to develop both a language of critique and a language of hope that work conjointly and dialectically and which have proven successful in helping generations of disenfranchised peoples to liberate themselves. Although Freire's work is most often taken up in education circles, his inspirational thought provides a depth and richness that should not be restricted to any one discipline or field, and his democratic, socialist vision and revolutionary humanism provide a source of radical hope in an age marked by postmodern despair and Nietzschean nihilism. While postmodern prophets have, for the last two decades or so, been busily proclaiming the implosion of subjects or treating them as mere functions of discourse, as entities which float aimlessly in a sea of ever-proliferating signifiers, Freire reminds us of the living, breathing, and bleeding subjects of history; the children of the damned; the wretched of the earth; the victims of the culture of silence. Unlike those that would have us believe that the cart of history marches forward on its own without the agency and will of embodied social actors, he reminds us that people do in fact make history, although not always in conditions of their choosing. In Freire's narrative, social agents are firmly rooted in historical struggle and never lose their capacity for effecting social transformation. His dialectical posturing, where the world and action are intimately intertwined, reveals the potency of human enterprise and human knowledge as both products of and forces in shaping social and political reality.

Moreover, his dialectical understanding of the subjective and the objective, the culture of everyday life and the broader matrices of capitalist social organization bear mentioning, especially at a time when many seek to bury objective reality beneath the priority of significations, discourses, and texts. Freire, however, reminds us that the polarization of wealth and the rampant poverty, exploitation, alienation, and misery engendered by the ravages of global capitalism are historical realities

Freire reminds us, in short, that in a world where too many do not eat, where too many are denied justice, and where too many are deprived of their humanity, it is still too early to write the obituaries of revolutionary humanism and the project of democratic socialism.

whose material and objective existence can hardly be denied. This is a strand of Freire's work that speaks volumes in an intellectual climate that is, as Kincheloe (1994:217) aptly points out, "blind to the political but hypersensitive to the cultural." Indeed, in the rush to avoid the "theoretically incorrect" sins of totalization and economism, many have elided even a minimalist concern with political economy. As a result, many have replaced the economic reductionism of orthodox Marxism with a new form of reductionism — that of culturalism. The current romance with the cultural and the concomitant ignorance of political and economic conditions has helped to advance the importance of cultural identification, especially for marginalized constituencies, but at the same time has obfuscated the political and economic roots of their marginalization and undermined an exploration of the ways in which difference is actively produced in relation to the history and social organization of capital — inclusive of imperialist and colonialist legacies. Freire's insights become all the more crucial given this context, for he insists upon a deep connection between the culture of everyday life and the machinations of capital. His approach is aimed at transforming the underlying economic structures that produce relations of exploitation.

Finally, at a time when the narrative of humanism has been relegated to the dustbin of history, Freire's revolutionary humanism (as opposed to bourgeois liberal humanism) provides a constant reminder that the project of humanity remains unrealized in the most profound sense. Freire's commitment to human emancipation and the extension of human dignity, freedom, and social justice to all people — a commitment to realize these values and promises in concrete, practical terms rather than merely giving them lip service in some abstractly delineated discourse of rights — reminds us that one must remain dedicated to the struggle for democratic socialism precisely because (to paraphrase Eagleton, 1996) these values have not yet been universalized. Freire reminds us, in short, that in a world where too many do not eat, where too many are denied justice, and where too many are deprived of their humanity, it is still too early to write the obituaries of revolutionary humanism and the project of democratic socialism. It is now up to progressives everywhere to actively embrace Freire's radical spirit, see his vision through, and above all to keep hope alive.

Peter McLaren is a Professor in the Graduate School of Education and Information Science at the University of California, Los Angeles, California.

Valerie Scatamburlo is a Doctoral Student in the Department of Social and Political Thought, York University, Toronto, Canada.

References

Eagleton, Terry. *The Illusions of Postmodernism.* Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, 1996.

Kincheloe, Joe. "Afterword," *Politics of Liberation: Paths from Freire.* Eds. Peter McLaren and Colin Lankshear. London and New York: Routledge, 1994, pp. 216-218.

Questions to a rock

for Alexis

Did you know Fidel used to be a professional baseball player?
That he could've made it to the pros big and rich?
Did you know he tried revolution twice?
That the first time landed him in jail and then exile?
Did you know as well that Fidel was a law student?

Sometimes things don't work out the way we'd like or planned them to.
Sometimes we need to improvise and change course en route.

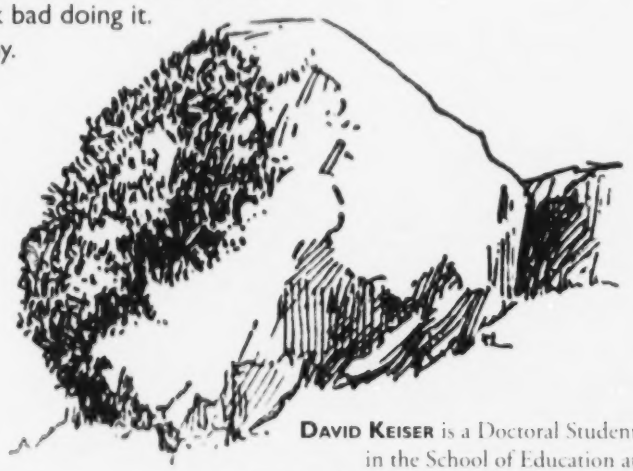
Did you know it's okay to stand alone, content with the truth of your soul?
Do you know that 's easier said than done?
Do you know the roots of the phrase "rule of thumb?"
Would you still use it if you did?

Everything we need to know we learned from others
and yet we need to own our actions to hold ourselves accountable.
We need to separate the wheat from the chaff and eat well;
we need to shuck the corn and discard the husks into
a compost pile a mile high and grow more corn for the next hungry one;
we need to breathe for our ever.
That is all we need to do.

Yet some of us blaze trails for the future;
some of us rake up the past to reveal God's beauty unearthed.
Those of us who try to do good look bad doing it.
Those of us who care dare to ask why.

Why care or struggle about justice
under capitalism?
Why be a feminist under patriarchy?
Why cut against the grain?
Why swim against the tide?

Some of us never answer these
questions, but blessed are the
ones who try
and stay solid anyway.
You rock.



David Keiser is a Doctoral Student in the School of Education at University of California, Berkeley, California.

Teacher Research

Praxis for the Oppressed

by Susie Weston-Barajas

An Introduction

Recently, I found myself sitting in an inservice becoming absolutely enraged with the presentation. I furiously took notes, writing down not only what the presenter was saying, but how and why I disagreed with much of the content. I found myself citing research and theory, pointing out contradictions, and writing examples from my own experience that sat in direct opposition to the content of the inservice. Did I let those notes just sit in a folder somewhere and collect dust? No way! I engaged in an online dialogue with other teachers to vent my frustrations and voice my opinions. Much to my surprise, my comments were answered by the presenter. This has developed into an ongoing dialogue that has affected both myself and the trainer. The two of us exchange views, opinions, research, theory, and resources. Even though we do not always agree, we learn a great deal from each other. This exchange has even affected the presentation that the presenter delivers to teachers who will receive this training in the future.

How did I get to be this type of an educator? How did I get to be the type of teacher who is not afraid to voice my concerns and effectively argue with research and theory? What has led me to strive for critical consciousness in all I do? What has happened to me in my ten years of teaching that has led me to this point? I believe it is the process of praxis — the cycle of reading the word and the world, reflection, action, and further reflection. My journey has been slow, and I was unaware it was taking place for many years. It began, and continues, by engaging in teacher research — by working to investigate my world in an effort to transform it for the benefit of my students, my colleagues, and myself.

A Rationale

"We must scream loudly that, in addition to the activism of unions, the scientific preparation of teachers — a preparation informed by political clarity, by the capacity of teachers' desire to learn, and by their constant and open curiosity — represents the best political tool in the defense of their interests and their rights. These ingredients represent, in truth, real teacher empowerment. Empowerment includes, for example, teachers' refusal to blindly follow prepackaged educational materials produced by some experts in their offices to unequivocally demonstrate their authoritarianism. The development of the so-called teacher-proof materials is a continuation of experts' authoritarianism, of their total lack of faith in the possibility that teachers can know and can also create" (Freire,1998, p.8).

We usually think of students as the oppressed. I argue that teachers are oppressed, and often unaware of this oppression.

We usually think of students as the oppressed. I argue that teachers are oppressed, and often unaware of this oppression. if we are aware, we are certainly not willing to make our voices heard and do something about the situation. The consequences could be very negative. It is easier to simply "close our doors and just teach our kids."

What is it that informs our practice as teachers? In the classroom, teachers are informing their own practice on an ongoing basis. This occurs informally by utilizing the knowledge gained from the teaching and learning process. But this is not the kind of activity that informs our practice on a more formal level. Teachers are often subjected to long inservices, boring workshops, and useless conferences, where outside "experts" deliver what is deemed to be appropriate and correct by the powers that be, the oppressors. Teachers, the oppressed, sit through these staff development offerings politely and quietly. Some wait anxiously for the evaluation period at the end so that they may anonymously share their thoughts, concerns, and feelings. This is certainly not safe to do *during* a presentation. One might be labeled a "troublemaker" and be treated differently — with caution. After the staff development experience, teachers go back to their classrooms and do what they know is best for their students. I know that is what I always did.

Many teachers do feel empowered in their own classrooms (Shen, 1998). But this is where the empowerment ends. The nature of the teaching profession creates specific empowerment problems, as described by Sagor:

"For too many teachers in too many schools, the job of educator is more akin to blue collar work than creative profes-

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

sional practice. Their experience differs significantly from that of many other practitioners engaged in similar creative professional pursuits. For example, doctors, lawyers, engineers, architects, and other professionals engaged in creative problem-solving routinely collaborate with other professionals on their projects. Generally, the strategies they employ in their practices have grown from innovations either developed by them or generated by practitioners engaged in similar work. Moreover, rather than relying on the judgments of administrators, most engage in continuous quality control over their own work" (Sagor, 1997).

Sagor also describes the three major factors which keep much teacher work in a "blue collar" mode: teachers work in isolation, are generally excluded from knowledge production, and are subjugated to external quality control.

Teacher research offers a powerful, viable and empowering model for change. When teachers engage in teacher research they begin to inform their own practice. They begin to have influence rather than being acted upon by external forces. Teacher research is activism based upon informed action and reflection. Teacher research is praxis.

In the Mythicization of Education, *". . . the oppressors attempt to destroy in the oppressed their quality as 'considerers' of the world. Since the oppressors cannot totally achieve this destruction, they must mythicize the world. . . the oppressors develop a series of methods precluding any presentation of the world as a problem and showing rather as a fixed entity, as something given - something to which people, as mere spectators, must adapt"* (Freire, 1970, p. 120).

Education has been mythicized to the extreme. Many teachers, along with parents, administrators, legislators, politicians, and the public, have come to believe the myth that teachers need outside experts to deliver sound pedagogical practices. Teachers are not encouraged to think critically and question those in power. A large number do not have faith in themselves and their ability to engage in critical dialogue. Several years ago, I questioned the validity of a presenter's research. I asked for data from the presenter several times. I wanted to be assured that the claims being made were legitimate and based upon adequate research findings. When I did not receive any of that data (which was promised to me time and time again), I decided to investigate on my own. The results of my inquiry did not support the claims made by the presenter. When I attempted to share this information, I was promptly scolded by an administrator for taking such action. My name was "tarnished" for a while following this occurrence. So much for critical dialogue.

The myths of the failure of education have also come to be accepted by many educators: the rhetoric is part of our daily lives. Teachers (and the public) are bombarded by the media with the reports of failures in student achievement, the lack of adequate job preparation for students, the underqualification of teachers, the superiority of private schools, and a public that is unhappy with its schools. Of course, these myths are far from the truth (Berliner and Biddle, 1995), but the damage has been done.

These myths that surround education are not just "givens" that are to be accepted and followed. Unfortunately, these myths are currently informing what passes for pedagogy all over the country. These myths have even impacted legislation in California, Texas, and other parts of the country:

"In statehouses, in local school boards, and in Congress, legislators and other policy makers are busy trying to rescue American education by mandating how children should be taught reading, what bodies of research should inform teaching practice in the teaching of reading, and who should be allowed to educate reading teachers and prospective teachers. California has adopted legislation (already successfully copied in the House of Representatives) that would fund inservice programs only when the providers of inservice pass tests, not of their academic credentials but of their subscription to certain acceptable theories of learning, research findings, and instructional practices, forsaking all alternative theories, bodies of research, and unapproved practitioners of research and instruction" (Blau, 1998).

These myths that are informing politicians and legislators do not need to be blindly accepted by teachers. Through teacher research, teachers can engage in a process of dispelling myths and accurately naming their world. Teachers become responsible for investigating and reporting their realities, not the media, legislators, or politicians.

The Culture of Silence

"By relying on words that transmit an ideology of accommodation, such literacy work reinforces the 'culture of silence' that dominates most people. This kind of literacy can never be an instrument for transforming the real world" (Freire, 1985 , p. 9).

The myths of education and the nature of the teaching profession have created a "culture of silence" among teachers. This is not to say that teachers do not discuss their work, they do. But this discussion is often limited to recess and lunch talk in the lounge, where teachers feel free to vent their frustrations, share their concerns, and celebrate their successes. Outside of the lounge and the classroom, the culture of silence dominates. Teachers do not feel free to voice their thoughts and professional opinions beyond the safe forum of the school site. As a result, the myths continue to inform practice, and teachers are unable to transform their world. Teacher research is a way to break the culture of silence in a manner which is both meaningful and empowering.

My beginnings in teacher research were grounded in the safe context of my own classroom. I investigated how student questions guide curriculum, my expectations, and how those expectations impacted student performance, and the effects of a more interactive, brain-compatible curriculum on students with severe disabilities. The more I engaged in teacher research, the broader my work became. I began to ask

questions beyond my classroom — questions that impacted many other teachers and students. I eventually wound up investigating conservative political influences on education via the internet by joining a conservative list serve. My research and inquiry had led me from my classroom to the world wide web. The more I questioned and investigated, the stronger and more empowered I became. I feel the culture of silence has been broken for me. I feel my work is meaningful and moves me forward. Teacher research has become my praxis.

Reading the Word and the World

"Critical study correlates with teaching that is equally critical, which necessarily demands a critical way of comprehending and of realizing the reading of the word and that of the world, the reading of text and context" (Freire, 1998, p. 22).

The first step in teacher research is to critically investigate present realities. This does not occur in isolation. It is work that is done collaboratively among teachers. Teacher researchers examine current issues and realities from all perspectives. They read the "word" and their "world."

It is absolutely critical that teachers engage in professional reading of all types. Teachers should be avid readers of research and theory, support and criticism, and apply this information appropriately to the process of studying their reality. If teachers do not arm themselves with a working knowledge of educational research, theory, and practice, they will be unable to effectively enter the dialogue and have an impact on their world, let alone transform it.

This is how I was able to enter into a dialogue with the presenter I spoke of earlier. If I had not been grounded in theory and research, this type of critical encounter could not have taken place. I would have simply sat and absorbed the information, grumbling with what did not fit into my own scheme of things, and then have gone back to my classroom to "just teach my kids." Fortunately, this did not occur.

Teachers must not be afraid to utilize their knowledge to accurately read and name their world for what it is. One cannot engage in true praxis without honestly investigating and identifying the critical features of one's situation. We must not be concerned with offending others or being "politically incorrect." From this truthful and candid reading of the word and the world, teachers will develop a new knowledge base. It is from this new base that questions will arise which they desire to investigate more fully in order to improve professional practice.

If teachers do not arm themselves with a working knowledge of educational research, theory, and practice, they will be unable to effectively enter the dialogue and have an impact on their world, let alone transform it.

A New Knowledge Base: Critical Knowledge

"In the process of decodifying representations of their existential situations and perceiving former perceptions, the learners gradually, hesitatingly, and timorously place in doubt the opinion they held of reality and replace it with a more and more critical knowledge" (Freire, 1985, p. 53).

As teachers engage in this process of investigation, they will discover the knowledge they require to inform their professional practice. No longer will they require the "experts" from outside sources to direct them to sound pedagogy. Teachers become the creators of the knowledge through exploration, investigation, and participatory research. The questions that are central to their practice will be investigated — data is collected, analyzed, and reported through a collaborative effort. Based upon the findings, action is taken. the myths and outside knowledge which previously defined reality are replaced by a critical knowledge based upon the direct experiences and findings of the teachers in their world.

Teacher Research as Praxis

"Critical consciousness is brought about, not through an intellectual effort alone, but through praxis — through the authentic union of action and reflection . . . and in the process become capable of transforming the world — of giving it meaning" (Freire, 1985, p. 87).

Teacher research does not stop at the actions taken based upon the research results. The process includes critical reflection upon the action. It is a cycle of becoming informed through the reading of the word and the world, investigating the world, taking appropriate action, reflecting on the action, and beginning again with new knowledge and information. My own praxis is never-ending. I am continuously reading my world and acting critically based upon my current levels of knowledge and experience, reflecting upon my actions, and beginning the cycle again.

The process of praxis does not begin and end with the individual. the same is true for teacher research. In order for teacher research to have an effect, it is shared with others in the education community. Teachers who engage in participatory collaborative research should feel proud of their accomplishments and openly share their findings with others. It should be kept in mind that the purpose of teacher research is not to produce findings which will be generalizable to all populations. The purpose is one of praxis — to investigate and critically reflect upon one's own world, and to share this information and process with others. This sharing impacts other teachers, who become motivated to inform their own practice as well. Teacher research is praxis in every sense of the world. It is teachers reading their world, informing their

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

own practice, and transforming their reality. It is a powerful process that is shared with others.

The question then arises, how do we share our praxis and research with others? It may begin as simply sharing during grade level meetings. An individual or group may decide to investigate a topic that is of interest to them, such as concepts of justice, friendship, or what makes a good journal topic. Whatever the topic may be, teachers researching, sharing, and engaging in a collaborative model for change is a beginning. This may lead to the sharing of one's work at a staff meeting or a district inservice. When the word spreads about powerful work, opportunities often arise for sharing to occur. I have been asked to present some of my work at conferences and workshops just because "the word gets around." Teachers who share an interest may start a teacher research group that works together and shares their work with others, possibly even begin submitting articles for publication. I belong to such a teacher research group (Collaborative Action Researchers for Democratic Communities, CARDC). We share our projects, write together, give each other support and feedback, present at conferences, and are occasionally fortunate enough to publish our work. The key is to begin *somewhere*, to share with *someone*, and to *continue* the process.

Educators as Politicians

"As educators we are politicians; we engage in politics when we educate. And if we dream about democracy, let us fight, day and night, for a school in which we talk to and with the learners so that, hearing them, we can be heard by them as well" (Freire, 1998, p. 68).

Education is political — this is more obvious today than it has ever been in the past. Since the conservative critiques of schools that began in the 1950s (Raywid, 1962), to the unprecedented and politically motivated *A Nation at Risk*, to today's media fueling "crisis" rhetoric, to the taking over of our local school boards, the politics of education are in plain sight for all to see. Those who matter most — students and teachers - are usually left out of the decision-making process. Those in power, the oppressors, will argue that our voices are sought and heard. This may be true. How many of us have had district administrators ask us to work on a committee, voice our opinions, and then do the exact opposite of what we recommend? Yes, teacher voices are sometimes sought and heard. Then ignored.

It is critical that teachers engage in a pedagogy that embraces the learner as knowledgeable, intelligent, and capable. Teachers in the education community and society as a whole must be treated in the same manner. We must also be embraced as knowledgeable, intelligent, and capable. The voices of teachers must be heard beyond the classroom and the school. This will not occur without teachers who are dedicated and committed to engage in a process of praxis that will inform practice and be shared with others. This type of praxis is naturally political because education is political. Teachers must not fear this involvement — they must embrace it wholeheartedly. It is this type of commitment and participation that will lead to an empowerment of teachers and their students. If we do not begin to inform our own practice, become involved in the dialogue, and work for positive change, we will be part of the problem rather than the solution.

Final Thoughts

"Educators must ask themselves for whom and on whose behalf they are working" (Freire, 1985, p. 180).

Teachers must ask themselves this question on an ongoing basis. We are not working for the administration, the politicians, the critics, or the media. We are working for students. We have the power to know and create. We have the ability to engage in critical pedagogy and to inform our own practice. Teacher research is one of the tools with which we can know, create, and inform. Teacher research is praxis for the oppressed.

Susie Weston-Barajas is a teacher-researcher and third Grade Teacher in Fullerton Elementary School District, in Fullerton California.

References

Berliner, D.C., & Biddle, B.J. (1995). *The manufactured crisis: Myths, fraud, and the attack on America's public schools.* Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Blau, S. (1998). Toward the separation of school and state. *Language Arts, 75* (2), 132-136.

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed.* New York: Continuum.

Freire, P. (1985). *The politics of education: Culture, power, and liberation.* New York: Bergin and Garvey.

Freire, P. (1998). *Teachers as cultural workers: Letters to those who dare to teach.* Boulder, Colorado: Westview.

Raywid, M.A. (1962). *The ax-grinders.* New York: MacMillan.

Sagor, R. (1997). Collaborative action research for educational change. In Hargreaves, A. (Ed.), *1997 ASCD yearbook: Rethinking educational change with heart and mind* (pp. 169-191). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Shen, J. (1998). Do teachers feel empowered? *Educational Leadership, 55* (7).

Power, Politics, and the Middle School Classroom

By Chris Byron

Students in Friday Forum holding a rainstick.

"The eighth graders are the most powerful," said Edward, looking around eagerly for sympathy and support as he and other students in my sixth grade middle school classroom discussed the complexities of power and power relationships in the school.

"I agree," replied Scott. "They have all the power!"

"Tell me more about that," I said.

"Well, the eighth graders get to sit in the back of the bus, and if you try to sit there first, they push you out of the seat. The first week of school I tried to sit there and they beat me up."

James shook his head in agreement and added, "They bully me because I'm so small."

"Well, they don't bully me, and the next time they try anything with you, James, I'll help out," replied Sam.

Thinking they might rally behind Scott who seemed to have a great many problems on the bus and during snack, I ventured, "It's too bad you weren't there when they beat Scott up."

Sam looked at Scott and said, "Uh, well that's Scott. He deserves it; he always does things to make people angry."

"So, you mean it is okay for the eighth graders to beat him up?"

Tales of injustice erupted, spilling into the classroom as students found an arena for their opinions in our weekly class meetings. The discussions grew out of a thematic cycle on power in which everything we studied, from Mesopotamia to the ravages of nature in their own backyard, was analyzed in terms of power and its ramifications. I wondered what would happen when we examined our own positions of power and privilege in this upper/middle class, predominantly white community and considered the responsibility that accompanies this privilege. This eventually became the question for a collaborative-action research project that included my students and CARDC (Collaborative Action for Democratic Communities), a supportive group of teachers and University professors who acted as "critical friends."

In September, to initiate the power theme I asked my students to write a classroom constitution consisting of a "Bill of Rights" and a set of rules and consequences. Students drafted the document during Friday Forum, a weekly class meeting which provided the format for discussion of classroom, community and world issues, and encouraged participation in shared decision-making regarding academic studies, classroom problems, class rules, conflict resolution, and students' expectations of teachers. The rights, when completed, comprised the most important social studies text on democracy in the classroom — important because it was written by the students and me, and because it provided the framework for everything we did, delineating the power structure. Equality and justice emerged (as it has year after year) as key issues when students decided that everyone should have the right "to be treated equally, listened to, and to state their ideas without being laughed at." The topic of bathroom privileges created intense dialogue for three weeks because every student who felt strongly about this issue pleaded for the opportunity to speak. They had discovered the power of voice and wouldn't be silenced.

Thus the document evolved slowly. When it was time to make the rules, many students were bored and wanted to move on, so their rules sounded like those they had posted in their classrooms for the past five years: "Come into the class quietly, do all your work, respect the rights of others, don't yell out, raise your hand when you want to speak." When asked what the consequences should be for students who continually abused the rights of others, they responded, "Write their names down as a warning, then give them a check. If they continue, give them a detention or call their parents. Students wanted me to police the class, and no

persuasion on my part altered their views. During this period of time, I began reading Paolo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, and his description of the "banking concept of education" impressed me with its relevancy to the institution called school.

> "... *the banking concept of education [which] sees the teacher as the narrator, the students the object of the narration. Students are containers to be filled with knowledge. The teacher knows — the students don't. The banking concept of education mirrors oppressive society as a whole" (p. 59).*

It certainly mirrored my classroom in which students, trained to regurgitate rules mandated by the teacher, were unable to conceive of themselves as organizers of their own environment. They asked to be watched and wanted to "lynch" whoever was the culprit. I knew I had to rethink my approach to this problem as I couldn't nudge them into creating rules that required self-discipline. After several months of drafting, discussing, categorizing, and revising, we finally came to consensus, producing a text that became a guideline for living in the classroom, the school, and the community.

In October, tales of oppression by older students occupied a number of heated discussions. Eighth grade boys bullied younger students on the buses, often pushing them out of coveted seats in the back. During snack they cut in line or begged for money. Some of the sixth graders were angry, others intimidated, while a few defended the eighth graders. Finally they acquiesced to the system saying, "Well, it is okay because when they [the eighth graders] were in the sixth grade they were picked on, so in two years it will be our turn," or "When we were in the fifth grade, we had the power and ruled the younger kids, now we're on the bottom," or "I don't pay any attention to them. They like to tease, but I don't mind. I think we are bashing the eighth graders, and it's not fair because they are not here to defend themselves."

As I continued to read Freire, I was even more conscious of how closely my classroom and the school community resembled the social structures described in his book. The eighth graders were the oppressors, the sixth graders the oppressed.

> *"The oppressor feels that the earth and property, creation of men — everything — is an object of its domination. The oppressed want to be like the oppressor — want the same material things, the same domination over other things. For the oppressor, money is the sole thing and profit the primary goal. If others do not have more then it is their fault — they are lazy, they do not want to work and are incompetent. And "under the sway of myth and magic," the oppressed feel their position is the will of god"* (pp. 44-49).

When we talked about economic issues and problems of homelessness, many of my students declared, "People are homeless because they are lazy or incompetent. They simply do not want to work. They are bums (the most common term used by students when describing the homeless)." One child quietly said, "Some people are homeless because the big companies are laying off thousands of people," but few took notice of her insightful remark.

Gender issues arose from the conversations. Two girls said that they often sat in the back of the bus with one girl's sister who was an eighth grader, and that no one ever bothered them. They said that many of the eighth graders were really nice, adding that it was only a few boys who terrorized certain students. The boys laughed at this and said, "That is because you are girls." When I asked what they meant, they said, "Well, you don't hit girls." When I asked them to tell me more about that, the boys replied, "It is an unwritten rule — boys don't hit girls." The meeting ended with their emphatic declaration, "This is the way it is — you can't change it!" In the end, the strong, confident voices took control saying they were tired of the discussion. The oppressed (quiet, shy students) wouldn't speak up for themselves, and the oppressors (popular or aggressive students) refused to continue the dialogue, refused to see their position in these discussions. We weren't doing a good job of living up to the document we had produced at the beginning of the year, and I was stymied about the next steps.

I presented the problem to fellow researchers in CARDC, and one university colleague suggested I have students codify the conditions under which they felt powerful and powerless. Armed with construction paper, scissors, markers, and magazines, the students cut and glued pictorial symbols of their own experiences with power. In a later visit to the classroom, this same colleague asked students to produce sentences using each letter of the word "power." After a number of discussions, I typed the incidents which students then categorized.

Some of the common themes relating to power revolved around family safety and love (helping others, volunteering, or helping a friend) and being good in sports. Many dealt with school (getting good grades, speaking in front of a crowd, having their ideas and opinions listened to during Friday Forum, and being able to change things in the classroom). Because these kids often regaled me with stories about their latest and greatest new toys, I was surprised that few mentioned the power of money and acquisitions. Considering prior debates about privileges they would be entitled to in eighth grade, I was also surprised that few mentioned feeling powerful in terms of dominating others.

Instances of feeling powerless were when their parents were hurt, sick or mad at them, and natural disasters (fires, floods, mud slides). Occasions that related to our classroom Bill of Rights were being left out of a group, not being loved, and being picked on.

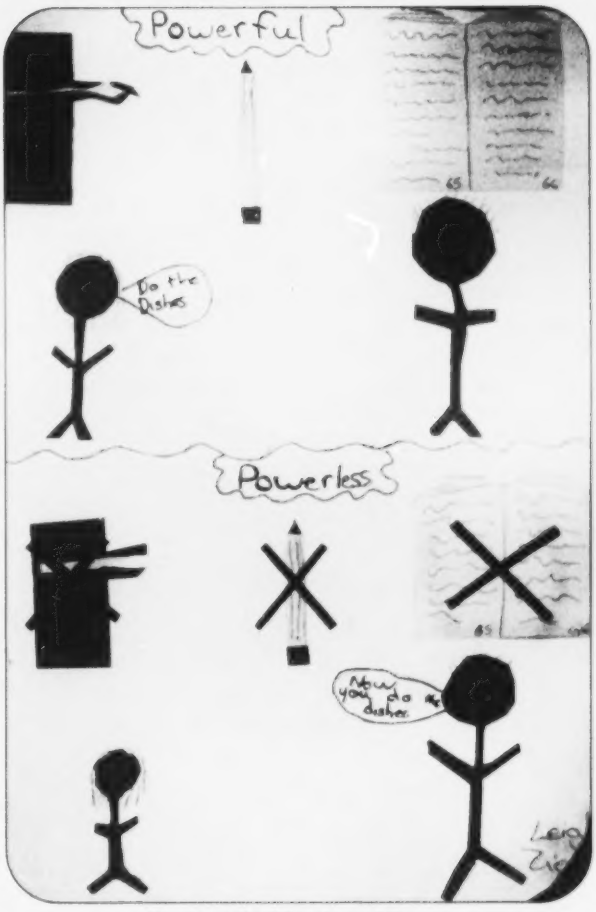
Feeling powerless myself in the face of an educational system founded on the banking concept, I wondered how to get them to examine their own assumptions in order to rethink them. What questions could I ask that would lead to some understanding of these assumptions? What would help me see

how they really see themselves? Should I observe the students, the roles they play, the relations between the leaders and the followers, the roles played by the girls/boys to discover their themes? I had been doing that, but should I recruit some student researchers who would do this also? The major question became, "How do I help students see their role in the classroom without becoming another oppressor?"

Part of the problem is that students generally do not see themselves as having power or voice in an adult world, nor can they conceive of themselves as change agents. An often repeated statement was, "We can't do anything because no one listens to us. We're just kids." Again, reading Freire shed some light on how completely students are socialized by the time they reach sixth grade.

> *"The oppressors use their "humanitarianism" to preserve a profitable situation. Thus they react almost instinctively against any experiment in education which stimulates the critical faculties and is not content with a partial view of reality, but always seeks out the ties which link one point to another and one problem to another, The oppressors want the oppressed to adapt to the situation (rather than change their consciousness) so they can be easily dominated. The oppressors use the banking notion of education along with the paternalistic social action apparatus. The oppressed then become the "welfare recipients." The oppressors marginalize the oppressed calling them outsiders, the pathology of a healthy society. But in fact, they are inside the system and must be so the oppressors have an object. In the banking system of education the teacher is the depositor, the prescriber, the domesticator* (p. 62).

Of all those words, I think the word domesticator is the most fitting. Many teachers, I think, are exactly that (and so am I a great deal of the time), often because life is easier for the teacher if the oppressed (students) are docile and tame, do not think for themselves, obey the domesticator and nod passively at the taming procedures. So — men first domesticated the land, domesticated the animals and then turned to domesticating other men and women. Was this because of the allure of money and property and power? Our school system not only mirrors our society, it continues to domesticate its students in the name of academic and intellectual challenge. I sometimes use history worksheets in a frantic rush to "cover the curriculum," or ask my students to come in silently and work without talking because I am tired and this is the easy way to "teach." The ideas are so entrenched they seem impossible to change.



Student Codification of Power

In January, when the class discussions bogged and I couldn't pull them out of the mire, I invited my university student volunteer to join our team. I did not hesitate to do this because, in the two days he had spent with me, he had shown himself to be a keen observer of the classroom dynamics. Without too much of an introduction, he dove into this project with relish. This not only broadened and diversified the research team, it also gave me a new lens with which to view our dynamic, often chaotic process. Following are his insightful observations:

> "Initially I intended to fulfill a classroom observation requirement for my admission to Chapman University's Multiple Subject Program. With the teacher's encouragement, I became involved in her students' learning process, and within a few class sessions, I found myself deluged with paperwork, analyzing data, and tallying numbers. She wanted to know my point-of-view as she explored the questions of equity and social justice in her classroom. What in the world was she talking about? I began recalling my own upper-middle class childhood, early education, and what it was like growing up white, male, and privileged in Newport Beach. We never grappled with such issues. Our days were filled with carefree living, surfing, and having fun. It was not until I became involved with an L.A. City School's volunteer project that I realized how privileged I was, and that I had a social responsibility to help those less fortunate than myself.
>
> I wondered how this translated into my work with Chris. Her dynamic sixth grade class provided us with an excellent opportunity to explore the

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

issues of power, equity, and social responsibility in these students (mostly white, and upper middle class as well) that had awakened in me at a much later age. One of the most important symbols of power in Chris Byron's classroom was the "rainstick," a tribal ceremonial instrument which we used to open and close Friday Forum sessions. Possessing the rainstick also meant the ability to speak and voice one's opinion, and as the stick was passed around the circle, each student valued his or her opportunity to stand up and be heard.

How could I emphasize to her students that everyone had a right to be heard, that everyone's opinion was valuable and should be counted, and that even one person could make a difference. Consistent with this theme, Chris read the class an article about a group of Canadian teenagers who were unhappy about Nike's unfair labor practices in Asia, and decided to do something about it. Through letter writing and protests, they brought the issue out into the open and raised the consciousness of those around them to the plight of these people working in slave-like conditions for slave wages. As Chris continued reading the article, I noticed a tremendous range of expressions in the faces of her students. Rather than look at the model of social activism that Chris had illustrated for them, they began exploring the Nike issue. Opinions ranged from absolute defiance of any wrongdoing on Nike's part (those students wore Nike head to toe in support of the company that had provided them with free sport's uniforms), to indifference ("it's not in America, so what do we care?"), to disapproval. One of the few dissenting voices was a female student who suggested gathering up everyone's Nike property and burning it as a message to Nike that such unfair labor practices were unacceptable. To this, a group of classroom Nike supporters angrily responded, "But why would you do that; it's like burning money?"

This student responded, "What about the man who set himself on fire in protest? Was that like burning money too? Does that mean his life was worthless?"

This is still a research project in the making. Our goal was to ultimately get students to understand that because of their privilege and unique positions, they had a responsibility to make this world a better place for everyone. We hoped this would lead to a greater understanding of the concept of charity versus social justice. Students were often asked to donate money or food for one cause or another. By providing financial assistance, are we absolved from further social responsibility or must we take leadership roles and work toward the overall betterment of society as a whole? To better understand the power structure between giver and receiver, this question must be addressed. In conducting this research, some students did not make the connection between their own positions and their ability to contribute and effect change.

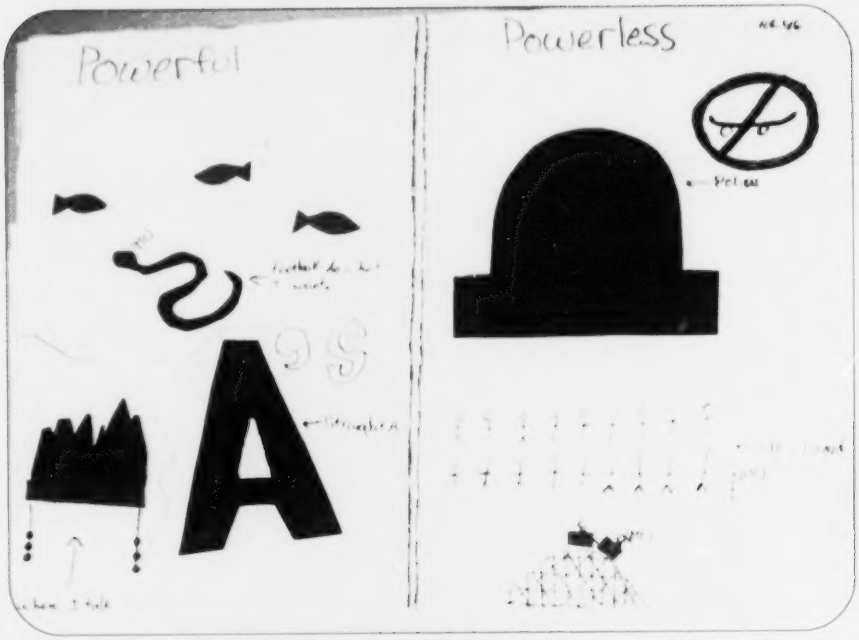
Wherever the students are in the process, they hopefully have a broader world-view, a greater understanding of the word "power," and an ability to look at themselves and ask what contributions they, as caring, compassionate citizens, can make in their lives. Will they just passively go about their way, or get involved and make a difference? As teacher, I hope to empower these young citizens to believe in themselves, become involved, and make a difference (Stegmann, 1998).

I have learned much by diversifying the research team. After many sessions examining data in an effort to make order out of chaos, Fred and I shared our perspectives. This not only clarified many issues, but provided some "ahas" for me. He clearly saw that competition and winning were very important to the boys' sense of power. For the girls, being a caregiver enhanced their feelings of power and well-being. Through modeling, he reminded me to be patient and to acknowledge the views and good thinking of all students, even when they expressed an opinion contrary to mine. During a heated discussion about Nike, I barely concealed my anger when several students verbally attacked one brave young lady whose ideas differed from theirs. Using Fred's recent example, I came back the next day, complementing them on their critical thinking, the fact that they questioned everything — me, the research, the papers — and on their courage to speak out. I said I was extremely proud of Katie who stood up for her views in the face of aggressive opposition. Those who had been the most brutal apologized to her without any prompting from me. What a lesson for all of us! When I remembered to facilitate rather than police the debate, students shouldered their responsibility of the power they had exerted over one member of the class.

My research group, who was involved in this project from the beginning, persuaded me to begin my observations of the power relationships in my own classroom before I had students examine power issues outside the class, or at least to begin these studies simultaneously. After discussions with another CARDC member who visited my classroom periodically to observe our project first hand, I realized that by trying to empower students and give them choices, I often reinforced the social stratification I was trying to eradicate. For example, when I let them sit wherever they wanted during workshop, they grouped themselves into social cliques leaving two students always reading at a table by themselves.

Other examples occurred during Friday Forum. "Center Circle" (Charney, 1992), is an activity in which one child moves around the center of a circle to make one of three gestures. If she has something positive to say to a student,

she shakes her hand; if she has something unfavorable to say, she makes a fist and pounds it into her other hand; if she has nothing special to say, she establishes eye contact and moves on. Often the same students remained outside the group and never had someone acknowledge that they had done anything, good or bad. Similarly, when the rainstick passed around the room giving the person who held it permission to speak, the social hierarchy still operated. When some students spoke (usually those outside the "in" group), or delivered an unpopular opinion, others tried to silence them with facial expressions or body language.



Student Codification of Power

Listening to my students during Friday Forum enabled me to better understand the importance of their world and its social construction. Some also helped me to see that I hadn't been clear as to the purpose of looking at power as a theme. Through constant discussion and debate, all learned that conflict, controversy, and heated discussions are okay if they lead to a clearer understanding of issues and each other.

When we began this project, I had hoped that through discussions of power relationships and social justice, students and I would look at our positions of privilege and realize the responsibility it entailed, but the year ended before we could actively pursue these issues. I hoped that students would realize that the "rites of passage" did not include exerting power over other individuals just because "that is the system and one day it will be our turn." What did happen was that we debated, argued, shared experiences, and identified and solved problems as a community.

John Dewey said that true democracy is more than just a form of government, it is a method of living together that breaks down class barriers. Students and teachers work together in a community of learners and problem solvers. Through shared decision making, experiences, and ideas, we began to develop an environment of trust, thus creating an "embryonic" society which was "worthy, lovely, and harmonious" (Dewey, 1899).

Freire throws out a new challenge to me as an educator, continuing this project with yet another group of students this year, I need to discover how to be "the humanist, revolutionary educator."

> *"The humanist, revolutionary educator's "efforts must coincide with those of the students to engage in critical thinking and the quest for mutual humanization. His efforts must be imbued with a profound trust in men and their creative power. To achieve this, he must be a partner of the students in his relations with them." For the teacher to forego the role of domesticator to become the student among students would be to undermine the power of oppression and serve the cause of liberation* (p. 62).

My research team (classroom students, university student, and CARDC members) led me to examine my own assumptions, and more importantly, my own behaviors inside and outside the classroom. I instinctively know that I must be a student among students, engaging in the same tasks I ask them to engage in, and modeling my process as I ask them to share theirs. I must trust the students, and sometimes I must get out of their way so that they have the freedom to pursue their dreams and to learn the responsibility inherent in this freedom. Most of all I need to "read my world" before I try to "read the world" of my students.

Chris Byron is a Teacher-Researcher and a Middle School Teacher, Laguna Beach Unified School District, Laguna Beach, California.

References

Charney, R. 1991. *Teaching Children to Care.* Greenfield, MA: Northeast Foundation for Children

Dewey, J. 1899. *School and Society.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Freire, Paulo. 1970. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.* New York, NY: The Continuum Publishing Company.

Stegmann, Fred. 1998. Writings from his journal.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The Right to Choose Choice

BY CORA SORENSON

The following article, "The Right to Choose Choice," was written by Cora Sorenson, a 17 year old high school student. The Editors believed it important to place her submission in context by including background information from Chris Byron, her former elementary and middle school teacher.

I have known Cora Sorenson since she was in my sixth grade language arts/social science class. What set her apart from many adolescents was her overwhelming concern and belief that she must, in her words, "contribute to the improvement of my community."

Her commitment to promoting the principles of democracy was exemplified by the projects in which she participated. In the sixth grade she wrote to educate her classmates about the necessity of saving the rain forests. As a seventh grader, she and nine other students accompanied me to Moscow, Russia, where she presented our democratic classroom experiences to scholars at a Russian/American educational conference. During her eight grade advisement class, she urged classmates to take on a yearlong project, planning assemblies, raising money and collecting clothes for a homeless shelter.

As a member of the Southern California Institute for Democracy in Education office, now incorporated into CARDC, Cora not only helped organize, but shared the keynote speech at a student developed and organized conference held at Chapman University in 1993.

Cora's contribution provides a rich and diverse student voice to this edition."

The Right To Choose Choice

November, 1998

Democracy appeals to those who are aware of their creativity, and elevate it to a certain plane of divinity. Democracy will succeed when society assumes its own mental potential and seeks a system which will liberate and encourage this potential. If society is conditioned to a creative wasteland, there exists no motivation to fight for a system which grants them an alien creative freedom.

Personally, I was introduced to democratic education in 6th grade, at the age of 11. I became one of a group of seven or eight students to expound its tenets. Upon reflection, I believe that if our specific classroom had been forced to fortify itself against outside aggression, it would have been able to protect itself, let alone extend its domain. Had they been challenged, I believe that the majority of students would have revealed themselves to be Soldiers, and fled in the face of danger. Others would have become traitors, hoping to return to the past (safe, known, and traditional) teaching methods. There would have been few Heroes. Today, I ask myself the relevant questions: Why would the majority have abandoned the cause? Why would they resist sacrifice?

While laziness, lack of creative motivation, fear of change, and commitment to the status quo (all change created the possibility of chaos) are valid answers, I also hold another reaction. I believe that what determines dedication is a sense of individual empowerment. Because this is democratic education's stated aim, it must extend to the *very beginning* of the democratic process.

The majority of learning decisions in our classroom were implemented only if student selected. However, I do not recall that our classroom was given the choice to *enter into* democratic learning. I believe resistance arose for the reason resistance arises to anything: there was a sense among some students that it was being imposed! It is *especially* critical that *democratic* education be an adoption and not an imposition. A democratic regime is an oxymoron apparent to the sensitive intuition of youth. I believe that the process would have been more successful if the students felt that democratic education *itself* was their selection. To be included in the process of adoption is like birthing a being, and to be included in this birthing solidifies the witness's commitment to and love for what is born.

Democracy in the classroom is dedicated to Choice, and defined by the Student Voice. Although it cultivates student choice within its own framework, this Choice is given *after the democratic classroom environment is "forced upon" the student.* However, the *initial independent selection* of democracy in the classroom will determine its survival. Students must be given the *Choice to select Choice* as a learning environment, as opposed to *how to use choice within the learning environment once it is given.* Not to do so is totalitarian, and therefore a hypocrisy which undermines democracy's ideology.

Because democratic education is far from universally implemented, its

success depends upon its ability to preserve itself against criticism of traditional educators. While maintaining itself, it must also reproduce through the assertion of its beliefs. Therefore, Educational Warriors are needed to fight for, defend, and protect democratic ideology. These Warriors are responsible for protecting the fortress of democratic education, and extending its domain. Within this Warrior class, the Soldier protects democratic education, thereby ensuring its survival. The Hero spreads democratic education, thereby ensuring its survival. The Hero spreads democratic education to other lands.

As protector, the Soldier does not assert, but maintains the status quo. He often risks democratic education by crumbling in the face of opposition. It is the Hero who asserts. While the Soldier may run from danger to save his own life, the Hero never vacillates. Therefore, certain essential questions must be posed: How does one train a Soldier to be a Hero? How does one prepare a hero to risk his life? Who is responsible for molding the Hero?

One quality which separates the Hero from the Soldier is Consciousness. Although the Soldier and the Hero share the same ideals, the Soldier is brainwashed and inundated with ideology; he is hand-fed Dedication, and he eats what his plate presents without question. He assumes these hand fed ideals to be his own, without consciously assessing their congruity to *his* inner beliefs. Unintentionally, the Soldier jeopardizes the cause, because he will flee if his heart has not *consciously* aligned itself to the cause.

In contrast to the Soldier's superficial and external 'commitment,' the Hero makes an internal commitment to a cause. Through this process the outer battle is incorporated into the Self, adopted as a personal mission, as a natural extension of personal ideals. The Hero's Cause is no longer an external abstraction, but a personal mission. His dedication is from his heart and is therefore irreversible. Because of this, he does not experience the Soldier's inner contradiction and incongruity.

It is *especially* critical that *democratic* education be an adoption and not an imposition. A democratic regime is an oxymoron apparent to the sensitive intuition of youth.

In addition to Consciousness, Choice determines the Hero's dedication. The Hero chooses *to* fight, whereas the soldier reacts to the battle by deciding *how* to fight. The Hero chooses democratic education, whereas the Soldier decides *how to use democracy's choice within the defending environment.*

Democratic education will have a plenitude of Heroes to summon to active duty only if its students *enter into* the democratic classroom consciously, through free will. If democratic education is to endure challenge, its *adoption,* and not just its *implementation,* must be the collective conscious decision of the students.

Today, I find myself reflecting upon the reasons behind my own commitment. Because the age of 11 obviously falls within the moldable period of Spring, I feel I was trained to climb the trellis of democratic educational theory. Although it is a path I support and advocate, I must recognize that I was a Soldier. I believed at the age of 11, democratic education was a *thought* for me, an intellectual concept. I was crossing the bridge between Soldier and Hero; I was dedicated enough to fight, but I lacked a *conscious* dedication to the ideals I defended. I was consciously dedicated in *mind*, but in my *heart* I was not self-aware enough to affirm my ideals, and therefore came short of the purest and strongest commitment. Only in the Summer of young adulthood does one weed the garden in order to identify true faith, in order to identify those plants which are native, and those which are imported.

At 17, I am weeding my garden, and consulting my heart. I realize that although I was too young to consciously affirm my heart with democracy, I now know the ideals of choice, freedom, creativity and liberation I learned in the classroom belong in the garden. I say this because I believe that it is only through the conscious effort of aligning the mind with the heart, the outer with the inner, of creating congruence between what one is taught and what one believes, that Heroes emerge.

To answer the question, "Who is responsible for creating the Hero?" I respond that the Hero is responsible for creating himself. Raising a successful collective army first requires that each individual enter into collective purpose through individual commitment. The dedication required to spread democratic education depends on this genuine alignment of thought and heart. Heroic dedication is born when the individual *chooses* his Cause. The Heroes of democratic education will be those who choose Choice.

Cora Sorenson is now an 18 year old high school student in Japan.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Learning together from each other

By Cheryl King

The following is an example of the many thoughtful responses I received from the research I conducted in a Kindergarten through third grade multi-age class last year.

The purpose of my research was to discover my role as an educator in a multi-age classroom. I wanted to find out how I was to constructively enable the students to express themselves freely, think critically, and develop their problem-solving skills.

Discovering my role as an educator in that classroom would not be easy due to the uniqueness of the teaching environment. The classroom consists of two other full time teachers and extensive parental involvement with the children remaining in the classroom for four years. These four years spent in the classroom help create a strong and active teacher-student-parent community. The parents support the class community in many ways. They are encouraged to participate by volunteering to work 3 hours per week per child on the floor. This structure allows 6 to 8 parents to work on the floor with kids every day in tasks, such as working on math problems, writing words in personal dictionaries, reading individually, and cooking with small groups.

This active classroom community, created among teachers, parents and students, generated many factors I needed to consider my research. I needed to understand how the students were affected by the wide range of students in the class, the six to eight different parents who volunteered to help in the classroom each day, and the three full time teachers. These factors lead me to question who the children learn from most effectively, the students, the parents or teachers, and to discover what the children's schema is of how their learning takes place.

> This is a picture about all the things my friends and I taught each other. But this is only 12 pictures. I have much more than this.

Being a fairly new teacher — two years old — most of my knowledge of my role in the classroom is theory. I have read lots of material from various educators regarding different philosophies, approaches and methods in the domain of education. Paulo Freire is one person who has had a tremendous affect on my thinking. He has made me question the role of a teacher and the purpose of an education. His ideas regarding the "problem posing" vs. "the banking concept of education" and "authentic thinking" emphasize the importance of my understanding and respecting myself and my students as well as my students' understanding and respecting themselves (Freire, 1970, pp. 53-60). By being aware of my students' varying perspectives of themselves and the world, together we, both teacher and students, can develop critical thinking skills by partaking in meaningful reflection and take "action upon reality" and create change within our life and the world that surrounds us (Freire, 1970, p. 65).

As encouraging as these concepts were, it was, however, scary for me to trust these ideas due to my inexperience and the control educators traditionally have been expected to have in the classroom. These points caused me to question the competency and self-knowledge of my students and myself. I feared that it ultimately came down to me to teach my students just about everything. Yet, unhappy with such control, I hoped my research, along with my knowledge of Freire, would help me discover myself as an educator.

I knew that I needed to open the lines of communication with my students in order to find out who they learned from and how they viewed their learning. To decide on an approach, I sought help from the members of a

group of educators that I collaborated with called C.A.R.D.C. (Collaborative Action Research for Democratic Communities). We met monthly and had insightful discussions about the research I was wanting to conduct in the classroom regarding the concept of problem-posing education. They helped me to focus on how I could answer my questions as to who the children learn from most effectively and how the students "perceive critically the way they exist in the world with which and in which they find themselves" (Freire, 1970, p. 64). I wanted to know what their schema is of how their learning takes place.

To discover the answers to my questions, I proceeded to ask some of the students to reflect and write down answers to these questions: What have you learned from another child? What has another child learned from you? I then asked a few of the students to draw a picture of how they learn in the classroom.

The first question, "What have you learned from other children?" generated a wide range of responses. Many children wrote about how they learned to play a certain video game or how to go down a slide. A few children analyzed their experiences of learning on a deeper level and focused on issues regarding relationships: friendships, caring, and life. For example, some children wrote about the first day they had ever attended school. They stated how someone had showed them around the classroom when they were a kindergartner and how that made them not feel scared.

A few others reflected on yet a deeper level and expressed how their experience affected the way they interact with other people. One child chose to write about a recent painful interaction she had with a neighbor regarding religion:

> I learned from one of my friends that every moment in my life "I'll always be happy, every moment except for one moment when one person made the wrong choice to say (something to me). He said that if I wasn't a Catholic then I will go to hell. He changed my life because that's one moment in my life that I'll never forget because he never says mean things. Now I like to keep people happy because I know how it feels.

Another child stated:

> I learned from my friend that making friends is not as hard as it looks, and now I have lots of friends. Thanks — He told me that you have to be nice to them, and so I did and now I can make lots of friends and my friends are nice to me.

Their authentic thinking of their world demonstrated how they learn about social interactions and relationships from their peers. No responses were made regarding academics.

In the second question the children continue to analyze their learning by reflecting on their world in answering the question, "What has another child learned from you?" At first, the students seemed to have, at first, a difficult time thinking as deeply as they did on the first question. They still managed, however, to think critically and express some wonderful thoughts regarding their process of learning. Their results seemed to demonstrate a balance between social interaction and relationships and academics.

A few students wrote about how they taught a child in the realm of academics. For example, one child responded with:

> Lots of kids have learned from me. They thought that the work in the classroom was hard, and they were happy that they knew it was not hard. I showed them my Math Book 1, 2, and 3. Now they know that it is not hard.

Another student wrote how he taught another child how to handle her anger:

> — has learned from me to have self-control and not to be jealous because other people have more things than her. When she got mad at me she would step on my toes so I told her to hold her breath and count to ten, then she will be good as new.

These students' writings show how they care for each other when a friend is having difficulty with something. It is their reality that consists of the importance of maintaining relationships through understanding and care in both academics and non-academics.

I then asked the students to continue with their critical thinking of how they learn by drawing a picture of how they learn in the classroom. Although they knew they did not need to write about it, a few children chose to do so. Their responses focused on social interactions and relationships of how to get along with each other as well as academics, such as reading.

The codifications that the children created show that although they learn from their teachers, they learn a great deal more from their peers. For example, one child, who only drew pictures, illustrated how she learned in the classroom through a grid of different pictures and captions showing interactions with her peers as well as her teachers. From a peer, she stated, she learned such concepts as to "Try harder, Sharing, 1-10 (counting), Swimming, and the ABC's." As for the items she learned from teachers, she wrote, "Learn to draw, Singing, and Love."

The children who chose to write along with drawing a picture wrote some pretty remarkable statements. For example, one student drew a picture of himself and another boy in the classroom with student pictures hanging on the wall and books on a shelf and wrote:

> This is me and — and he is teaching me how to read. It is good to read. I am reading a book called, *The Patchwork Girl of Oz*. It is a cool book to read. When I read it, it gets better and better. I love reading. It is so fun I cannot stop. I cannot wait to read.

This response comes from a child who has struggled with learning how to read.

One student, after drawing 12 different pictures of her with other children with the captions, "Helping others, ABC's, Listen, Swimming,

Kindness, and Love," wrote:

> This is a picture about all the things my friends and I taught each other. But this is only 12 pictures. I have much more than this.

The purpose of this research was to find out what is a child's schema of how his/her learning takes place in a multi-age classroom. I discovered the answer when the students responded to the last question with their drawings and words. The children in our class seem to learn mainly from each other as well as from their teachers.

There is more, however, that I have discovered about my students through their codifications. I also discovered what they learn. By thinking authentically about their world of learning, they were able to express how they have learned academics from other children; however, the majority of the students seemed to focus on how they have learned to cooperate and collaborate with other people as seen in the struggle with their first day of school and religious persecution.

The research collected suggests two points. The children's perception in this classroom is that they learn mainly from each other. The data also suggests that the students truly value and learn a great deal about social interactions and relationships, and more directly, how to get along with others. Although academics is part of what they learn, it is the acquiring of certain social skills, such as cooperation and collaboration that are exceptionally evident.

By communicating with me and sharing their personal experiences, they were able to demonstrate to me that education, as Freire discussed, focuses on the importance of valuing communication and the learners' critical thinking abilities. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire speaks of authentic thinking in which "The teacher cannot think for her students, nor can she impose her thought on them. Authentic thinking, thinking that is concerned about reality, does not take place in an ivory tower of isolation, but only in communication" (Freire, 1970, p. 58). It is not my role to fill their heads with my conceptions of cooperation and collaboration. They have knowledge regarding these ideas and have, in fact, reminded me through our communication of what they mean. They have alerted me to the work, the action upon reality that lies ahead of me and my students as we learn how to learn from each other.

> I learned from my friend that making friends is not as hard as it looks, and now I have lots of friends. Thanks - He told me that you have to be nice to them, and so I did and now I can make lots of friends and my friends are nice to me.

My research has enabled me to discover my students' thoughts and feelings regarding their lives as well as their perspective on their learning. I found that my role is to act more as an interactive guide who is capable of learning and growing as my students do through their authentic thinking of learning. Often at our C.A.R.D.C. meetings we would discuss how it is possible to tell who has the most power by the size of his/her chair. Although I often sit on the floor to work with my students I now know the importance of that choice. Sitting on the floor allows me to become a student and learn from each of my unique students as they learn from me.

Children know and understand much about their lives and how to live peacefully with others. Although I am their teacher and do teach them many concepts, my students have helped me grapple with Freire's ideas confirming my belief that it is not my role to teach them to think like me, but through valuable communication to think like themselves, for themselves. For it is in learning together from each other that we are able to create change within our world, our classroom, and ourselves.

Cheryl King is a K-3rd Multi-age Teacher in Orangethorpe School, Fullerton, California.

References

Freire, Paulo. 1970. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York, NY: The Continuum Publishing Company.

UNCOVERING A Myth

BY DEEDEE CARR

"These kids don't have any parent support." "You can't get blood from a turnip if it doesn't speak English." "We are not going to have any parent help in school or at home because they don't care, you'll see." "You can't teach these kids. Their parents don't care about school. It isn't important to them." These were all comments heard in the teacher's lounge at the beginning of our new school year. The comments reflected the frustration and fear the teachers felt when faced with a new school population due to recent district boundary changes.

Our school's demographics have changed over the thirty plus years I have been teaching there. In the beginning, neighborhood children walked to school from their upper middle class homes. PTO moms whisked around in pristine white tennis skirts. Dads were available to build booths for carnivals and to give career talks about being a doctor, lawyer, or stock broker. As those children grew up, recession aged neighborhoods. Our district needed to close some schools and increase the territory of others by gently rippling boundaries outward. "Apartment" children began coming to us. There were grumblings and adjustments from the staff concerning the wider disparity of reading groups.

Within several years, our outward moving boundary ripple gathered momentum and more children from the crowded areas of our community. Sometimes large chunks of classes were filled with children dislocated and bussed to us from their neighborhood schools. Our student population changed not only in transiency, but also in ethnicity. As a staff we adjusted to

You can't teach these kids. Their parents don't care about school. It isn't important to them.

the need for programs to handle a few limited English students. The PTO moms had changed too. Tennis skirts gave way to professional office attire, and dads were no longer available for all day projects.

Recently the district reopened and refurbished older schools and built new schools. Unfortunately, the explosion of non-English speaking children gushed from a part of town that had no space for new schools and no closed schools to reopen. This resulted in those parts of the community farthest from the problem enjoying brand new, state-of-the-art facilities, while those in the overcrowded area faced boundary shifts and year round scheduling. My centrally located school's boundaries were completely reworked to become an overflow school for this growing population. Children living across the street from school were sent to a newly refurbished school a mile or so northeast while two huge busses arrived each morning delivering children from one single apartment complex from over a mile away in the southwest part of town. The search for PTO members and officers became a top priority. Our classes are almost again mono-ethnic but now predominantly proficient in a language other than English.

The school population changed, but the faculty remained remarkably stable. The dual stresses of teaching limited English children, many reading far below grade level, and the critics of public education demanding blood at the altar of Published Test Scores flooded the staff room with feelings of bleak dismay. Dwindling budgets and declining volunteer populations joined the mix to compound our frustration in facing unrealistic goals. Some teachers, as quoted above, well aware of the difficulties in teaching this vast range of literate backgrounds while preparing for a state test with a howling public snapping at our heels, laid the blame of predicted failure to meet grade level standards to lack of parental support for education.

That angered me. I did not believe that our new set of parents didn't care, or wouldn't help. Fortunately, I have great support in CARDC, a research group I have been a part of for many years through all its evolving forms. At present, we are graduate students, university professors, and classroom teachers dedicated to collaborative action research, social justice, and democracy in the classroom. Paulo Freire's work is an underlying belief system upon which we have built many projects and fervent discussions. The words that so angered me in the lounge reminded me of Freire-based conversations about oppressors keeping the oppressed passive,

often through unworthiness myths.

> *"It is necessary for the oppressors to approach the people in order, via subjugation, to keep them passive. This approximation, however, does not involve being with the people, or require true communication. It is accomplished by the oppressors' depositing myths indispensable to the preservation of the status quo . . . "* (Freire, 1970, p. 120).

I wanted to expose the "Don't-Care-Non-English-Speaking-Parent" myth.

What would be the most successful way I could encourage the parents of children in my class to become visible in helping their children at school? How could I show they were involved with their child's education at home? How could I prove they cared about their child's success in school? In short, how could I help expose the lounge myth? Before so many Freire based discussions in CARDC, I would not have been as aware of my position of power in our society through being white and well-educated, and I would have smugly stated, "I began my interventions in September 1997 with Back To School Night and have continued studying the results into this new school year." Instead, I will submit a list of the things I tried to do to make parent's support visible and them comfortable in becoming visible.

Back To School Night

I stated my need and desire for help in the classroom, gave out 5 x 8 cards for volunteer responses to help, and personally talked to each guest. I gave each parent an index card and used the overhead to model suggestions for using it, along with verbal instructions. I explained and demonstrated the kinds of help I sought in the classroom and at home. I asked them to write their addresses, phone numbers, goals for their children, and how they might be willing to help on the cards.

Results

Seven (of twenty families) attended. Three filled out the cards (one did not speak English with confidence, two were bilingual professionals). One other mom, in broken English, promised to come if I told her son when I specifically needed her. My parent population included some who were not fully literate in their native language as well as professional bilingual parents (two doctors, one lawyer, and two office managers). This was about the same response that my four teammates received for classroom volunteers. It was less than we had all received in previous years.

A Weekly Homework Sheet

This lists the homework and asks for a parent signature each night, and also includes an explanation of one or two key points of study for the week. In the closing, *parents are mentioned by name* with a thank you for helping in the classroom or donating time and materials from the home. It also congratulates **specific children** for a variety of things. I believe that this sheet is one of the most useful things I have used in 30+ years of teaching.

It is where I announce specific needs for and invitations to parents to join us for particular activities. There is space for responses and, of course, the listing of homework each evening. I try to include at least one activity per week that requires family involvement. A recent example of this was to discuss at home the ways the students' families use teamwork at home and at work.

Another example occurred when the children interviewed grandparents, or grand aunts and uncles, about how they traveled to their present homes. I also include things like "I said my 4 times tables to _____ in _____ seconds" or "I discussed two examples of shelter in the desert with_____," so that I know whom the children are involving in their assignments. The homework sheet is collected each week, and used at conference times to further explain homework, what we have covered, what lies ahead, and it provides an anecdotal record of communication with the home and how faithfully homework has been completed. It also indicates the level of parent involvement in school work.

Results

Most parents signed the sheet regularly (only three students had ongoing problems of remembering the sheet or doing the work or getting it signed). Seven families used it for back and forth communication with me. The written comments were helpful to me and gave further insight about the level of concern and help the children were receiving at home. One third of the class responding with written comments — as good a response as I received in years before our boundary change. I realize many parents did not write because writing in English was difficult for them. Because this was not an excuse in years before, the response was actually better than in the past.

A Work Session

I needed help in making booklets, "spelling catchers," miniature books for summaries of books read to or by the children (these were hung as leaves on our book tree), sketching/writing journals for the children during their study of trees, and portfolios. The invitation for parents to join me after school in my classroom was announced in the homework sheet, and reinforced orally by the children.

Result

Four moms came with several toddlers and two of my students in tow. Two moms spoke English. All promised to come the next time I needed more booklets. We laughed and talked a lot, took turns finding things for the toddlers to do, got back aches from sitting in the tiny old wooden chairs, and completed all I set out to do and more. Because of the booklets finished, I was able to introduce an additional spelling program, reward reading, introduce a sketching-writing journal, and begin self-evaluation activities for the portfolio. The mothers that came have remained warm, friendly and supportive into this new year. One has voluntarily come to my new class conferences to translate for me. In short, it was a bonding session. None of my teammates asked for or received after school help to make classroom materials.

Food Donations

Food donations were made on several occasions during our year. The projects we used donated food for were:

1. *Ancestor party:* This occurred after three weeks of community building through parent interviews, researching oral family folklore, and name origins. This activity called for heavy family involvement. It not only built community, but also afforded practice in oral interviewing, letter writing, writing directions (recipes), mapping, using time lines, and researching transportation. As a celebration, families sent in favorite foods, both purchased and homemade. Parents also came to the classroom to help with logistics during our celebration. The parents' generous donations enabled the children to connect to each other's heritage writings and recipes through the experience of tasting the food written about. Their studies came alive.

2. *Ice Cream Sundae Party:* Donations of ingredients and parent time in the classroom were asked for to celebrate a unit on writing directions combined with a pop art project. The request was made through the homework sheet and orally by the children. Our language arts objective was to read, write, and follow written directions. Our art project was to cut out silhouettes of sundaes and place them on a patterned background. Children used their writing to create with adult help, their own sundaes.

The parents' generous donations enabled the children to connect to each other's heritage, writings, and recipes through the experience of tasting the food written about. Their studies came alive.

Result

Both of these requests for food and time were met far above my expectations, not only in amount of food, but also in number of parents in the classroom. In both cases there was more food than we could use. Four mothers and one father came to help with the ancestor party. Six mothers and one father showed up for the ice cream sundae building. The projects went smoothly because of parent help. The children were able to learn and evaluate their learning in real life situations because of the parent help. I believe the response was high because food is universal, language does not impede its use. The help and food asked for were specific. A cadre of moms from the work session of booklet making showed up at each event. I feel this shows they became comfortable about coming to school, particularly in each other's company. These volunteers were visible outside the classroom storing and retrieving food from the lounge refrigerator.

Class meetings

These were class meetings that deviated from the children's usual agenda requests because I explained my research to them and asked for their help as co-researchers in finding ways to get their parents to feel comfortable in our classroom. Diversifying the research team by extending it to include the children evolved from Freirean concepts of teacher-as-student along with student-as-teacher which was inspired by CARDC sessions.

Class meetings are modeled after Ruth Charney's *Teaching Children to Care*. We have strict rules that only the person holding our glass apple may talk. Everyone else, including me, waits for his/her turn. Disagreeing politely is encouraged and no put-downs are allowed. The agenda is usually decided by the class through a sign-up sheet posted for the week where children and teacher, write down issues they would like to discuss. This time it was a special meeting to explain my research and ask them for help and suggestions as part of the research team.

Result

The following suggestions were made by the children:

1. Make a center for ideas for parents to come or new centers
2. Have parents listen to reading
3. Show parents how to do order and teamwork
4. Ask parents to research teamwork in their jobs with us
5. Make cards to ask Dear Mom and Dad, Welcome to our class meeting
6. Tell them if they can come to help
7. Make activities that they can have fun together and help other kids with reading
8. Bring pillows to make them comfortable
9. Invite them to a read-a-thon
10. Make a birthday cake to welcome the family
11. Use puppy lips to ask them to come (pouty lips and limpid eyes during request)

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Begin a class published "teamwork photo-journal" book

The class categorized suggestions of photos to take and interviews to conduct. Parents invited to accompany children on their "shoots."

1. In homework sheet
2. By personal letters written by their children (yes, another standard!)
3. Teacher one to one contact

We decided and set up photo times in three categories: home, school, and community.

Children who had access to cameras were the interviewers and in charge of permission slips. The need for permission to use photographs was introduced and discussed. They were very clear about permission being necessary for using people, their words, and pictures in research. The children explained this to parents at home and at school. We organized in teams of four children and one parent to go about the school and out into the neighborhood taking pictures of teamwork where they discovered it. Other children volunteered to take pictures of teamwork at home.

Result

Five parents agreed to come. Four showed up. Children wrote permission slips (research ethics) and took photos or conducted interviews (questions prewritten and approved by the class) during field research to find teamwork happening. The children brought in developed film and the class selected photos to use. We grouped the selected photos on our "Teamwork" wall, along with interviews and their handmade permission slips. The children chose a name for our publishing company. They worked in teams to complete the book with the purpose of being able to share it with the school and their families. Unfortunately, the final draft was not finished before the school year ended.

Four parents coming in the middle of the day to lead teams of students on photo taking trips is a brave turnout. This activity was not as easy to define as bringing food and helping the children build sundaes. Initiative and responsibility are involved because I would not be going on the shoots with them. The parents indeed were involved in their children's education. They showed effort and caring by being there for such a brave venture. They were visible volunteers.

My teammates on either side of me, same grade level, same 20:1 ratio, and with classes evenly distributed with mine from the same population, did not have a second language parent involvement with their classes. In one class, one mother volunteered to help all day, everyday. On the other side, there was no parent involvement of any kind, not even a room mother.

The children, as part of the team, brought fresh ideas of possible interventions and spread their enthusiasm into their homes. It also made the going slower, because finding time for planning and discussing with them during the school day was a difficult feat, even though I tried to tie the research to our curriculum and standards through involving parents with what we were studying. The constraints of time and curriculum are real and binding. In a nutshell, diversity adds sparkle, insight, and scheduling difficulties.

I found the parents of my class were concerned parents. I also found that **when clear and specific requests were made, they were overwhelmingly met.** With more general requests like, "Come to aid in the classroom when you can," or, "Type children's stories at home when you have time," help was much harder to come by. Through communication on the homework sheet, conferences, and conversations, I found all of the parents interested in their children's progress. Some did not help with homework because they do not read English or were working at night. This is not different from most of my classes through the years, except for the concentrated effort on my part, and the inclusions of the children, parents, and my collaborative research partner, Dr. Soohoo, in helping me do this. I made these findings well known in our lounge. However, it came as a surprise to only a few. Many of the teachers by this time had weakened the myths on their own, through getting to know the parents, and learning how to effectively work with their new student population. As a matter of fact, much of the conversation this year has been about how lucky we are to have such supportive, caring parents, even if they aren't able to volunteer as much as those in the old days. I think the myth of Don't-Care-Non-English-Speaking-Parents is uncovered and dying a sure death. I think that is happening because the middle class white teachers (oppressors) are learning to see their new world, and the limited English parents (oppressed) are beginning to use their voice and also are taking on the customs of their new school system. My project did not change their world, it helped me read my world.

Deedee Carr is a Teacher-Researcher and a 3rd Grade Teacher in Estock Elementary School in Tustin Unified Schools, Tustin, California.

References

Charney, R. 1992 *Teaching Children to Care.* Northeast Foundation For Children, Foshay, A.W. Action Research in the Nineties. Winter 1998 The Educational Forum. Volume 62.

Freire, P. 1970 *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.* The Continuum Publishing company, NY.

Hafernik, J.J. Messerschmitt, D.S. and Vandrick, S. December 1997 *Collaborative Research: Why and How Research News and Comment.*

MacFarlane, E.C. Boost Family Involvement — *How to Make Your Program Succeed Under the New Title I Guidelines.*

O'Loughlin, M. Helping Poor and Working-Class Children Make Something of Themselves. *Democracy and Education,* Fall 1997, Vol. 12, no. 1.

How Fifth Grade & Paulo Freire Taught Me to Teach Graduate School

BY LANI M. MARTIN

> The authoritarian teacher believes that he (sic) is best able to decide what shall be learned and that, if he does not decide and enforce, nothing will be learned. He thinks that children not only are lazy, but perverse as well, and he sees himself as a correctionist. These beliefs call for a method. First, the learner must be held still, for he is going to have something done to him, somewhat in the manner that a calf is tied for branding. Communication between learners must be reduced, and, if possible, eliminated, because the communication is to come from the teacher; it cannot come from the learners, for they do not know what has been decided upon to be learned, nor would they have any significant contribution to make if they did know (Kelley & Rasey, 1952, p. 143).
>
> *(K)nowledge emerges only with intervention and reinvention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry men (sic) pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other* (Freire, 1971, p. 58).

One of the biggest issues I grappled with during the nineteen years I taught school, and now while teaching at the university level, is the problem of teaching in an authoritarian way within a democratic society. One of my teaching beliefs is that to be a good teacher (as in being a good parent) one must give more and more responsibility to students so as to make the teacher less and less the focal point of the classroom. Another belief is that informed choices and participation are necessary in a democratic society and therefore valid and essential in the classroom, both as a part of daily living in the classroom and in preparation for adult civic responsibility. However, teaching to objectives, individualized learning, positive reinforcement, five- (or seven-) step lesson design, clinical supervision, and especially assertive discipline became, during my teaching experience, the outward mechanisms by which I was supposed to impose my authority and become the provider of wisdom and knowledge. These strategies imposed from outside the classroom did not help the learner become a responsible participant in his/her own education, develop a sense of responsibility, or learn to make informed choices.

> Knowledge emerges only with intervention and reinvention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry men (sic) pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other.
>
> — PAOLO FREIRE

As a classroom teacher, I gradually developed a philosophy which is based on observations of students and a belief in democracy. When I was asked to teach graduate-level university classes in social studies methods, I was determined that the classes I taught would be based on what I had learned while teaching elementary school. I wanted to create a democratic classroom.

What is a Democratic Classroom?

The democratic classroom is not a formula, nor a recipe such as is offered by those who advocate assertive discipline. Rather it is a series of assumptions and values interwoven with classroom practice. There is no complete, formulaic definition of a democratic classroom that those of us who attempt it can all agree upon, but there is general agreement that such a classroom is based on choice, community, and self-governance. Meaningful areas for choices for students and their teacher center around curriculum and/or ways to study it, assessment, physical surroundings and rules concerning classroom governance. In a democratic classroom there are mutually determined expectations of self and others, a recognition and celebration of diversity, joint decision-making, both students and teacher serving as sources of knowledge, and personalized student and teacher relationships.

I know of few elementary or high school classrooms which could be called democratic; many teachers find the very idea threatening (Butchart & McEwan, 1998).

Now that I am teaching graduate school, I see even fewer students who are informed participants in their own learning. At the beginning of every semester, most of my graduate students want definitive parameters for each aspect of the class. Few of them are able to see ways to approach problems or projects without rigid specifications and

directions. What grade they will earn permeates all discussion, guides all work, and often limits cooperation. They are intolerant of ambiguity, suspicious of collegiality, and seldom challenge conventional wisdom. I don't see a commitment to learning, but rather the necessity to earn that A or B.

Ten and eleven-year-olds provide a contrast and a lesson for teaching graduate students.

First There are Fifth and Sixth Graders

The philosophical basis for my pedagogy is centered on a belief in children and their abilities. It consists of five parts: 1) Children want to learn; 2) Children have knowledge which is not recognized by curriculum writers and policy makers; 3) Children are capable human beings with the ability to make decisions about their own learning; 4) Children have the ability to assess what they have learned. The fifth part of my pedagogy is a belief in democracy and the need to teach democratically.

Would these five beliefs also hold true for graduate students? I decided to examine my experience with elementary school students.

My first belief is that children want to learn. Watch pre-schoolers engaged in something they want to learn — it is total concentration. When a new concept comes to a four-year-old, he will work with it, talk about it, then may leave it, but eventually will come back to it until he understands it (to his four-year-old satisfaction). My grandson is trying to understand the concept of borrowing books at the library rather than buying them at the store. He says we buy books at the library, but they don't cost money and he can't keep them. Look at the children of all ages mastering roller blades. Do they want to learn? Of course! They may not want to learn what the curriculum and textbook writers want them to learn, but they do want to learn.

The second philosophical tenet is that children have knowledge and experiences which are not recognized and therefore not built upon. They are, instead, looked at as empty vessels waiting to be filled. Freire (1971) calls this the banking method of education. Contrast that view with the problem-posing education he proposes:

> *Banking education resists dialogue; problem-posing education regards dialogue as indispensable to the act of cognition which unveils reality. Banking education treats students as objects of assistance; problem-posing education makes them critical thinkers. Banking education inhibits creativity and domesticates (although it cannot completely destroy) the intentionality of consciousness by isolating consciousness from the world . . . Problem-posing education bases itself on creativity and stimulates true reflection and action upon reality . . . . In sum: banking theory and practice, as immobilizing and fixating forces, fail to acknowledge men (sic) as historical beings; problem-posing theory and practice take man's historicity as their starting point* (p. 71).

Children bring experiences, values, and learning which are valid, special, vital — and ignored.

Two largely unrecognized values children have are a deep sense of what is fair and what qualities they like and respect in a teacher. One year when I taught a fifth-sixth combination class, we had a class meeting in which the sixth graders brought up a problem. They believed that I was treating them unfairly. They itemized their complaints and I asked them to list and discuss what they wanted from me — their goals and expectations. Their desires were in no way unreasonable or unreachable. Problem-posing rather than banking education recognizes the values and experiences students bring to their learning.

My third philosophical tenet is that children have the ability to make decisions about their own learning. Many times my students made choices as a class or in groups about how they would study a particular unit or lesson. They start with what they already know about a topic, go on to what they need to find out, and then plan strategies for finding out what they want to know. Ownership of their learning leads to intense interest and commitment to what they study. There not only is group decision-making about their own learning, but individual students are able to plan and follow through with well-conceived decisions about what they want to learn.

Here are two examples. One boy in my fifth-grade class was brilliant in all areas, but produced only what was required. However, he knew more about baseball than most sportswriters. His journal was filled with real and imagined baseball games; he wrote scripts for imagined sportscasters; and he reported in his journal on almost every game played that year. He and I discussed what he would like to accomplish in fifth grade and he decided that he wanted to write a history of the most important baseball games ever played. He did this as a year-long project. He had to use his skills at reading, writing, and researching, plus his knowledge of math and history to complete his long, detailed report. It was outstanding — what more could a teacher ask?

Another student, who loved to read, initiated a project in which she read all the Newbery medal-winning books. She then chose the eleven she liked the best, wrote synopses and reviews of each and graded each book according to its suitability to be read aloud in the classroom. Neither of these projects was motivated by me, but rather they were initiated by two 10-year-olds who had been empowered to make choices.

My fifth and most important tenet is: Can we justify teaching about democracy in a traditionally structured, authoritarian classroom? Dewey (1916) defines democracy in a way that is clearly related to the classroom when he writes that democracy is:

> more than a form of government, it is a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience. The extension in space of the number of individuals who participate in an interest so that each has to refer his own action to that of

> others to give point and direction to his own, is equivalent to the breaking down of those barriers of class, race and national territory which kept men (sic) from perceiving the full import of their activity (p. 101).

I would argue that we have neglected the most important element in our classrooms — the student — by making teachers and the textbooks the authorities and classroom focus. Teaching students to take responsibility for their own learning while also teaching and learning with them the ways to resolve issues and conflicts is to experience life in a democracy.

Class meetings provide an important opportunity to resolve issues and conflicts. In my fifth-sixth grade class, these meetings took place at least once a week, sometimes more if a particularly important issue arose. Meeting agendas were open — the students and I could put items on the agenda for any of them. We discussed such issues as how to arrange the desks, playground disputes, who should be elected as class officers (and how that could be equitably done to avoid a popularity contest), and also any other trials or triumphs we cared to share.

At one of our class meeting, an issue arose which the students had been grappling with on a daily basis. Our school had no cafeteria or lunchroom; instead the students ate outside at fiberglass lunch benches which were placed on the blacktop with no protection from either weather or omnipresent seagulls. The sun beat down, the wind blew, and the seagulls swooped. The students wanted to know what they could do about that situation, and we discussed the people who make decisions in a school district and how those decisions are made. The class decided to write a letter to the school board. Their letter talked about the sun, the wind, and not the seagull's swoop, but the seagull's poop. Two board members responded to the letter, each saying that shade structures would be built within the next two years. Though impressed with the fact that board members had responded and promised to rectify the situation, the students also quickly figured out that they themselves would not benefit from the changes promised (their having graduated to junior high school). That revelation, of course, led to further discussions about doing something for which you get no benefit but which helps those who follow you. This became one of the most outstanding discussions we had about the responsibilities of citizenship in a democratic society.

My students at the elementary level included learning-disabled children, non-English speaking and limited English speaking children, as well as identified gifted and talented children. My fifth-sixth grade students spoke Farsi, Spanish, Hindi, Tagalog, Chinese, English, Korean, and Japanese. They were Latino, African-American, Asian-American, and Euro-American. Our use of democracy in the classroom led to the class (and teacher) deciding how the room was arranged, what the teacher and student expectations were and how problems could be identified, discussed and resolved. Because of our democratic classroom, racist episodes were almost nonexistent, and respect for one another's cultures was the norm. This, then, was my experience with fifth grade.

And Then There are Graduate Students . . .

I decided to transfer my convictions about children and their abilities to be responsible and in control of their own learning to the postgraduate setting.

Among the first things I did with my graduate students was to have them list what they already knew about social studies. We then began a list of what they wanted to learn about social studies and teaching. The two lists led me to modify the course syllabus and to build on the knowledge my students had come with.

While teaching fifth grade I became convinced that a sense of community was one of the most important parts of learning. We did many class-building activities which generated a feeling that we were all in this education business together and needed to work collaboratively and supportively. When I tried this with the graduate students, they became leery and suspicious about activities which assumed they would learn each other's names and something about one another's lives. I insisted they participate and I kept reassuring them that building a sense of community is possible in schools and that it was important to learn this to become great teachers.

*t*eaching students to take responsibility for their own learning while also teaching and learning with them the ways to resolve issues and conflicts is to experience life in a democracy.

I listed my expectations for the class which included such concepts as tolerance of ambiguity, use of collaborative learning, and the questioning of conventional wisdom. One of the most successful strategies turned out to be generating a list of what their expectations of me were and what they would like to gain from the course. Some of the expectations for me could have been taken directly from the fifth grade teacher expectations chart, such as wanting me to be fair, interesting, use humor (fifth graders wanted me to smile), and teach them something. The college students also wanted more specific learning, such as classroom management, how to deal with parents, how to plan lessons and units, etc. Again, these expectations guided the continual revision of how the class functioned.

My graduate-level students are all

successful graduates of the educational system. Unlike my fifth-sixth grade students, they were not an ethnically diverse group, and there were far more women than men. My attempts to give them choices initially were met with sometimes less than success and, at times, were received with bewilderment. They were resistant, suspicious, and reluctant. However, eventually they learned to love the democratic approach.

It Begins to Come Together

Clearly, my early struggles with creating a democratic classroom have a basis in critical pedagogy. "The Freirean notion of situating pedagogy in the real needs of the learners" (Shor, 1987, p. 4) was something that I attempted to do with my fifth graders and now attempt to do with my graduate students. Schneidewind, in her essay on guidelines for teaching methodology in women's studies (Shor, 1987), uses five democratic classroom processes which, though based on feminist pedagogy, also are closely related to classroom practices suggested by others (Darder, 1991; Freire, 1971; Giroux, 1988; Kreisberg, 1992; Darder, 1991; Freire, 1971; Giroux, 1988). These practices are: 1) To develop mutual respect, trust, and community in the classroom; 2) To share leadership; 3) To create a cooperative structure; 4) To integrate cognitive and affective learning; and 5) To take action. The second through fifth practices are explored below; the first has been discussed in the preceding sections.

Shared leadership in the fifth grade is much easier to achieve than at the graduate level. Fifth-grade students had no trouble with making suggestions about how they would learn and what they wanted to learn, but most graduate students feel that this is the teacher's area of expertise. Their attitude seems to be that the professor holds the knowledge, is obligated to transmit it, and that the students' role is to write it down. Contributing to the dialogue about how this should be accomplished is difficult for these adult students. One of the students said it best:

> I recall my first day of class in (social studies methods class) . . . I remember the words that pushed my panic button. This course was introduced as being one that would be taught cooperatively. YIKES! You mean that I can't study really hard, spend a few hours at old Mr. Typewriter, read a lot of text and supplemental articles, take a midterm, a final, and then sweat out a couple of weeks awaiting my grade?

Each semester I put my university students into cooperative groups for a variety of activities. I've found that both the fifth grade and graduate students need many team-building activities to feel comfortable with what for some is a new form of learning. Although many students are resistant at first, almost all groups worked well together and formed friendships which lasted beyond the semester or (in the case of fifth grade) the school year. To illustrate this, below is an excerpt written by one of the students in my methods class who had struggled with the concept of working with others:

> . . . I learned a tremendous amount from working within a cooperative group to create a social studies unit. This gave me an opportunity to see first hand the benefits and pitfalls to this method of learning. I found that it expands learning, critical thinking, and understanding. All this came from a need to discuss and articulate thoughts clearly and thoughtfully. I also gained new perspectives and insights, not to mention some wonderful ideas.

Integration of cognitive and affective learning takes place through the use of interactive journals. Graduate-student journals are records of readings, of experiences in the elementary classrooms in which they observe and teach, as well as of anything personal they care to include. The journals are exchanged with other students who respond in writing; I read and respond to them. (All comments are quoted with the permission of the student.) This student wrote about her feelings at the end of the semester:

> The journal was very helpful and it was a first for me to be required to do one. I like the fact that our peers were required to read our entries and respond because I got a lot of valuable input . . . I can look back at my journal and see how I have grown . . . .It is amazing how different my perspective is on how to handle a classroom and I feel I owe a lot of that to my journal writing and the input I received.

My fifth-graders wrote in their journals about their reading, learning, and whatever they felt important to include. I read and responded to their journals every week.

Action in the fifth grade was relatively limited in that children generally are not seen as active initiators of their own environment. However, among many other activities, my fifth-graders interviewed parents and grandparents and prepared their own questions and program for Grandparents' Day in the classroom. They questioned, and attempted to influence, the inequity of the adults' and children's eating spaces by changing what they felt was an unfair rule. The university students, as the semester progressed, engaged in praxis — reflection, action, and reflection — as they struggled to work in a collaborative fashion, and to practice the theories they had learned in the classrooms they were observing and

> *M*y elementary students grounded me in a democratic framework which I hope I am passing on to the future teachers who are a part of my life now.

teaching.

One way the graduate students engaged in praxis was to check for racism and sexism in children's literature. One young woman wrote the following after reading and critiquing some of the books she had read or had read to her as a child:

> I realized . . . that my thought world had been highly influenced by the . . . white dominant books I had read as a child. It was very good that this happened to me because I consider myself to be very non-prejudice(d). I work with all minorities, have a culturally diverse set of friends. Still, some thoughts and attitudes are ingrained in my head from the infiltration of racist and . . . sexist literature, as well as learned attitudes from others.

My graduate students also examined and discussed currently popular forms of discipline and classroom management to determine what type of person benefits from the rigid, teacher-only directed systems that prevail in K-6 education. We looked at how teachers perceive the children in their classrooms, and how they may not be aware of cultural and racial biases. After completing the course, one student described how she changed in the way she responds to students:

> Although I have never intentionally discriminated against any child in a classroom, I believe I have become very conscious of the need for me to treat every child equally. I never really thought about it before because I thought that because I value all people regardless of color, race, religion, or handicap that I would never have to consciously work to be equitable to all students. I found out this semester that I was wrong. I am working hard to be aware of each child and my response to him/her.

The second semester I taught this class, there was a severe budget crisis at the university. Many planned courses had been canceled and students were frantically trying to add classes. Twenty students wanted to petition to get into my course, but the room could only accommodate five more students. When I arrived at the class, a class add list was being circulated, and it was proposed to me that I take the first five students whose names appeared on the list. One of the students wrote in her journal about her impressions of that first meeting:

> When I think back to our first class meeting, two things stand out with such clarity, it seems no more than a week has passed separating that day from this. As long as I live, I don't think I'll forget the look on Natalie's face [her friend who was trying to add the class] as she debated the fairness, the democracy of starting a "student add list" when only a few were privilege to its creation. That brings me to my second memory, the open platform discussion which followed. As the minutes ticked away, decidedly more students joined in the discussion. Was it fair? Quietly I sided with those who felt the list was an unfair endeavor, clearly allowing self-appointed representation to a lucky few. I said nothing, instead thinking to myself, "ultimately, it's for the professor to decide." While listening to students voice opinions, vent frustrations or plead their individual case, I was given a subtle introduction to the democratic classroom. It was the first time I'd ever felt so genuinely good about being in a particular class. And it was only the first day. I was excited. Although I felt involved. In the end, the class, by a unanimous decision, picked a fair method . . . [of allowing students to add the class]. My memory of that afternoon's seemingly unconventional ongoings exists with such clarity. . . . Now, given the opportunity to reflect over my personal connection to and understanding of the content of this course, I'm generating an assessment/evaluation . . . which will prove more revealing than any test ever could.

Can fifth grade inform graduate school? I know that my teaching experiences at the elementary school level gave me a foundation for teaching democratically at the university level. Without that experience I would probably teach as I was taught — in the manner of an authoritarian — holding students down, insisting on one-way communication — mine — and denying the expertise of learners. My elementary students grounded me in a democratic framework which I hope I am passing on to the future teachers who are a part of my life now.

Lani M. Martin is a Lecturer in the Department of Elementary, Bilingual and Reading Education at California State University in Fullerton, California.

References

Butchart, R.E., & McEwan, B. (1998). *Classroom discipline in American Schools.* Albany: State University of New York.

Darder, A. (1991). *Culture and Power in the Classroom.* New York: Bergin & Garvey.

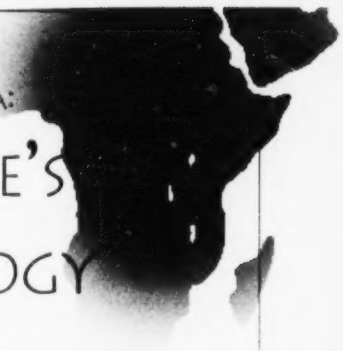
Freire, P. (1971). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.* New York: Seabury Press.

Giroux, H. (1998). *Schooling and the struggle for public life: critical pedagogy in the modern age.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Kelley, E. E., & Rasey, M. I. (1952). *Education and the Nature of Man.* New York: Harper & Brothers.

Kreisberg, S. (1992). *Transforming power.* Albany: State University of New York Press.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE



EDUCATING FOR DEMOCRACY IN SOUTH AFRICA:

LESSONS FROM FREIRE'S HUMANIZING PEDAGOGY

BY IVY N. GODUKA

INTRODUCTION

The process of democratization in South Africa began in the 1990s with the unbanning of all political groups, and the return of large numbers of exiled South Africans. This process culminated in the release of President Nelson Mandela after 27 years of imprisonment. Following these events were long and difficult negotiations that finally resulted in a general election in April of 1994, when for the first time all adults from diverse backgrounds were eligible to vote to elect a new government democratically. Thus, 1994 will be remembered by South Africans and the international community as a historical year that brought the collapse of the colonial-*apartheid* era, and witnessed the beginning of a new era that embodies the principles and practices of democracy. These events also resulted in the drafting of a new constitution that has since been adopted. The new Constitution marks the birth of a new nation and ushers in an era of freedom and the dawning of democracy in families, schools and the entire society of South Africa.

To sustain and strengthen her new democracy, South Africa needs critical and engaged citizenry who are educated in the principles and practices of democracy. Since schools and universities are microcosms of the larger society, they can provide possibilities within every classroom and every subject matter for learners to be educated in these principles and practices. In addition to viewing schools as critical domains to prepare individuals to contribute to building South Africa's economy, they should also be envisioned as cultural, political and social sites that are required to educate for democracy in order to sustain a democratic South Africa.

However, given the culture of violence that was and still is the order of the day throughout South Africa, a major challenge facing the system of education is to create learning environments, curricula and teaching strategies that embrace the culture of peace in which a participation in a democratic order can be nurtured. More specifically, schools and universities should develop new curricula and instructional strategies that do not promote crude ideological manipulations, bigotry and hate among groups from diverse backgrounds. Rather, they should create curricula that foster and enhance the principles of *yobuntu* — oneness of humanity, *agape* — altruistic and unselfish love, and *mitakuye oyasin* — we are all related, as well as the principles of critical thinking, dignity and respect through a liberatory, humanizing, equitable, democratic and inclusive education. Traditionally white schools and universities, those which have particularly played a conduit role to perpetuate white supremacy and hegemonic education, should be targets for creating a culture that is rooted in peace and democracy. Battles over limited resources, poor infrastructure or lack thereof, and the struggles to overthrow the white minority government in African and Coloured universities have also created antidemocratic attitudes that need to be addressed in the new curricula and instructional strategies.

WHAT ROLE CAN PAULO FREIRE'S PEDAGOGY PLAY IN SOUTH AFRICA'S SYSTEM OF EDUCATION?

> *.....the democratic school should not only be permanently open to its students' contextual reality in order to understand them better and to exercise its teaching activity better, but it should also be disposed to learn of its relationship with the concrete context. Thus, proclaiming itself democratic, it must be truly humble in order to be able to recognize itself, often learning from one who was never schooled ... The democratic school that we need is not one in which only the teacher teaches, in which only the student learns, and in which the principal is the all-powerful commander* (Freire, 1998, p. 74).

Freire's pedagogy of freedom offers a powerful context within which critical educators in South Africa can rebuild democratic learning environments to affirm and validate every learners' cultural identity and voice, and thus, their transformation and humanization. His pedagogy poses a challenge to the old teaching strategies while it inspires critical educators to develop new roles and to embrace "indispensable qualities of progressive educators — such as humility, courage, tolerance, decisiveness, security, a patience, discipline and the joy of living — qualities that can be nourished, cultivated and actualized only through a deep political commitment to ***teach as an act of love***" (Freire, 1998, p. 3). Freire makes teaching an act of love very clear when he writes:

> It is impossible to teach without the courage to try a thousand times before giving up. In short, it is impossible to teach without a forged,

invented, and well-thought-out capacity to love . . . .We must dare, in the full sense, to speak of love without the fear of being called ridiculous, mawkish, or unscientific . . . .We must dare so as never to dichotomize cognition and emotion. We must dare so that we can continue to teach for a long time under conditions that we know well: low salaries, lack of respect, and the ever-present risk of becoming prey to cynicism . . . .We must dare so that we can continue to do so even when it is so much more materially advantageous to stop daring.

In the following section I will provide a brief summary of who I am and how I am connected with Paulo Freire — the indigenous Brazilian scholar, a cultural worker and social activist who put his life on the line for social justice. He developed a liberating pedagogy whose aim is to "transform existing power and privilege in the service of greater social justice and human freedom" (McLaren, 1997, pp. 147-153).

His humanizing pedagogy is beginning to have relevance among many South African critical educators. This is so because of the collapse of the colonial-*apartheid* era, and the beginning of a new era that embodies the principles of *yobuntu, agape* and *mitakuye oyasin*, and of Paulo Freire's philosophy. Before this collapse, embracing these principles and philosophy and applying them to undergird the curricula and pedagogy would have been a contradiction in terms. However, efforts to integrate these principles and Freire's philosophy in education should be seen as a continuing process at the personal, political, social and institutional levels. For educators to continue this process, it seems that reframing the curricula and restructuring instructional strategies to promote cultural democracy in the learning environment will be central to these efforts.

YOBUNTU
UMNTU NGUMNTU NGABANTU

I am we; I am because we are — we are because I am.

Xhosa proverb

My contact with Paulo Freire— My Soul and Spiritual Brother

I am an indigenous *Xhosa* scholar and researcher whose geographic roots and cultural heritage are grounded in Africa. I was born, raised and socialized into a culture which embraces *ubuntu* — oneness of humanity. I was also born into the politics of *apartheid* that made me oppressed, disadvantaged and at risk in many ways. Throughout my childhood and school life, I never experienced freedom, liberty, social justice, and all the basic and fundamental entitlements such as respect and dignity, a humanizing education, and freedom to proclaim my cultural identity and voice, all those virtues that Freire's pedagogy claims as every learner's birth right.

Although I never met Paulo Freire in person, I have always felt that I know him and have always felt a spiritual connectedness with him and his scholarship. I only started reading the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* in the early 1980s while I was doing my graduate studies at Michigan State University, because during the late 1970s when I was doing my undergraduate work at the university at Fort Hare in South Africa, textbooks like his were banned. His book was the first to touch so resoundingly many of the deeper cultural, educational and political issues of my life and of many oppressed individuals around the globe. Since that time, I have always integrated his philosophy in my courses and my research, and wherever he is, I will always feel his presence as a Soul and Spiritual Brother on the journey to social justice.

His liberatory and humanizing philosophy reminds us about the commitment to struggle persistently with purpose in life and to intimately connect that purpose with what he called our true vocation — to be human. For Freire, a humanizing education could never be conceived without a profound commitment to our humanity. This is what Freire and Betto (1985, pp. 14-15) said about a humanizing education:

> *[It] is the path through which men and women can become conscious about their presence in the world. The way they act and think when they develop all of their capacities, taking into consideration their need, but also the needs and aspirations of others.*

Freire's humanizing education resonates very well with the principles of *yobuntu, agape* and *mitakuye oyasin*. The morally guiding principle *yobuntu* is grounded in the collective and cooperative world view that is rooted in the cultures and traditions of the indigenes of Africa, Asia, Australia, North and South America. It is embedded in their cultural practices and spiritual values, and expressed in the indigenous languages. The Xhosa proverb (one of the indigenous languages of South Africa) '*Umntu ngumntu ngabantu*' captures this world view. An English translation that comes close to this proverb is: 'I am we; I am because we are — we are because I am.' In other words, we are all related because I am you — you are in me. You are in my bone, soul and heart — I am in yours. Communality, collectivity, human unity, pluralism and multi-dimensionality are implicit in the proverb *umntu ngumntu ngabantu*. They operate in the philosophical thought of the indigenes in regard to relationships with other human beings, interaction with all creation and their way of thinking, feeling, speaking, learning and teaching (Goduka, 1996). The principle *yobuntu* also reflects our unity in diversity by recognizing the many traits humans share as part of belonging to the same

race and family — **the human race and the human family** — albeit our diversity. For example, our inalienable right of dignity and respect, a right to affirm our cultural identity and cultural voice (Goduka, 1996), and the need for food and shelter, as well as the need for positive self-esteem and self-actualization (Maslow, 1968) reflect our unity. Yet, our many varied backgrounds and psychological dispositions represent our unique individuality and diversity.

Closely related with the principle of *yobuntu* are *agape* and *mitakuye oyasin*. Agape means altruistic and unselfish love. It is love in which the individual seeks not her or his own good, but the good of her or his neighbor. It is love seeking to preserve and "to build communities of difference" (Tierney, 1993). *Mitakuye oyasin* — we are all related — is rooted in the *Lakota* indigenous tradition of the Natives of North and South America. The underlying principle of the Lakota world view that establishes a strong foundation for seeing children as sacred beings, for respecting all creation, and which every child learns and relearns throughout life, is the healing principle of *mitakuye oyasin*. Atkinson and Locke (1996, p. 41) reaffirms this notion of inter relatedness and interconnectedness with all creation when they write:

> Kinship with all creatures above, below and in the water is a living principle that gives the *Lakota* a feeling of safety in the world, as well as a feeling of reverence for all life, a sense of purpose for all things in the scheme of existence with equal importance to all, and an abiding love. This concept of life fills the *Lakota* with joy and mystery of life. As Standing Bear puts it, the *Lakota* could not despise any creature, because all creatures are of one blood, made by the same hand, and filled with the essence of the Great Mystery.

Mitakuye oyasin affirms that there is really only one human race and one human family, though there are people from diverse cultural, social, economic and religious backgrounds.

The implications of these somewhat related guiding principles have a profound impact on everyone in the classroom, the school and the university setting. Thus, to educate for democracy and liberation, each educator's role is to reframe the curriculum and the teaching strategies and to create learning environments that are grounded in the principles of *yobuntu, agape* and *mitakuye oyasin*. Such curricula, teaching strategies and a learning environment are likely to enhance positive dialogues that will facilitate learning.

These principles provide educators and learners with the lenses to view each other as interconnected and interrelated. They are an affirmation of an all inclusive unity, a connectedness that includes all creation, yet they also validate each individual as unique and diverse in many ways. Inherent in the principles of *yobuntu, agape* and *mitakuye oyasin* is an inclusive and collective spirit that can be drawn from to rebuild a foundation on which educators can construct unity-in-diversity in the curriculum. These principles also frame a healing process in the family, classroom, the institution of education and in South African society at large. Families, schools, and universities that work with these principles operate in a fundamentally different manner from those that do. The underlying assumption here is that all creation is interconnected and interdependent, yet each part of this creation is unique and diverse. Thus, educators and learners who embrace these principles also believe that we are so connected with one another that my gain is yours, and your loss is mine, because I am in you — you are in me. From this perspective, it is therefore, impossible to have a healthy society or institution when different individuals and constituencies are disadvantaged and in pain.

The principles of *yobuntu, agape* and *mitakuye oyasin* are crucial to the new and democratic South Africa because they provide a foundation for pre- and in-service teacher training programs and for beginning the healing process. Educators in South Africa and elsewhere are responsible for educating for democracy and social justice in order for the young generation to live and function effectively in a diverse society. However, society does not provide educators with adequate preparation and training to educate for democracy, thus to meet the educational, cultural and spiritual needs of all learners.

Building Cultural Democratic Learning Environments and the Curricula

The philosophy of cultural democracy proposed in this paper originated with Ramirez and Castanedo (1974), and has in many ways been affirmed and validated by Freire. It argues for the right of each individual learner to be educated in her or his language and learning styles associated with her or his ethnic and cultural background. This philosophy also assumes that each learner has a legal and moral right to remain identified with the values, languages and beliefs of her or his own ethnic/racial group, as she or he learns about and affirms other cultures and languages. Therefore, the philosophy of cultural democracy argues for institutions of education to develop learning milieus, curriculum materials and instructional strategies that are sensitive to the learner's cultural orientation, and thus, language and cognitive styles. As Ramirez and Castanedo (1974, p. 24) write:

> The philosophy of cultural democracy requires that schools refrain from making the choice for the child [learner]. A culturally democratic learning environment is a setting in which [each learner] can acquire the knowledge about her of his own culture. Furthermore, learning is based on communication, human-relational, incentive-motivational and learning patterns that are culturally appropriate . . . . .The educational goal is to help each [learner] to function competently and effectively, as well as to contribute to more than one cultural world.

Educating for democracy, thus, affirms each learner's right to be educated in her or his own language, culture, and

learning style. It provides for a curriculum that is both particularistic and inclusive. A particularistic curriculum includes both cultural knowledge and knowledge about culture. This entails cultural values and beliefs acquired during the socialization or enculturation process within the home-culture. According to this notion, learners (young or old) begin formal schooling with their learning already in progress. They have learned their native language, appropriate and acceptable behaviours and cultural values within the home-culture and from their community. Meaningful school learning should, thus, be directly linked to learning that is already in progress, in ways that extend and build on the knowledge that has already been acquired, as well as that which is being processed.

For example, in preschool and the primary grades, young learners who speak indigenous languages should be encouraged to use their home-languages because this forms a basis for learning new communication skills. Furthermore, encouraging young learners to use their mother tongue personalizes learning and increases the child's learning power by building on the cultural and linguistic abilities learners bring to the learning environment. The cultural and linguistic knowledge provides young learners with a basis for making sense of the world **within** and **outside** of the home-culture. For learners from the European cultural and linguistic backgrounds, their knowledge is directly linked to the socialization process, as well as to that which they will be learning in school. Consequently, these learners make a smooth transition and a solid connection between the home-culture and the school culture. As a result, for these learners, the likelihood of performing well academically is high.

For learners from indigenous backgrounds, there is limited or virtually no relationship between their cultural and linguistic knowledge (home-culture) and that which they learn in school. Because there is no relationship between the home-culture of indigenous learners and that which is learned in school, learning becomes contextually irrelevant, culturally insensitive and meaningless, and it increases the likelihood of placing these learners at a high risk for what schools consider to be the learner's poor academic performance. The school will, therefore, find "quick fixes" to "fix" these learners, rather than to look for the solution in the entire system of education which marginalizes and excludes learners from indigenous backgrounds.

Therefore, in order to build culturally and linguistically democratic curricula and learning environments, the knowledge acquired in school should be made contextually relevant, culturally sensitive and meaningful before it can be made critical and challenging. Rather than to view knowledge as static and objective, or as something that exists "**out there,**" it must be conceived of as an active process of engagement and involvement between the learner and that which is being learned. Thus, knowledge cannot be taken to speak for itself. It must be related to the categories of understanding which learners bring into the learning environment. To reduce learning to simply teaching knowledge that is "**out there,**" standardized and transmitted in quantitative terms, is to assume that learners do not bring to the learning environment a story, a voice, a culture and a set of presumptions about life. To believe this is to be oblivious of the fact that each individual learner reads her or his world based on her or his history, culture, religion, etc., before she or he reads the word. Freire (1998, p. 19) reaffirms this notion when he writes:

> *It is not just that teaching reading is engaging; it is a creative experience around comprehension and communication. And the experience of comprehension will be all the deeper if we can bring together, rather than dichotomizing, the concepts emerging from the school experience and those resulting from the day-to-day world... One of the ways we can accomplish this exercise is through the practice that I have been referring to as 'reading of a previous reading of the world,' and here 'reading of the world' should be understood as the 'reading' that precedes the reading of the word and that, equally concerned with the comprehension of objects, takes place in the domain of day-to-day life.*

Thus, the language of education that learners receive from the school or the university should build on what they bring into the learning environment. It should also embody a vision of providing them with a sense of cultural identity, cultural voice and self-worth.

The inclusive aspect of a multicultural curriculum on the other hand addresses the common needs of all learners. That is, it can permit the learner to formalize the understanding of her or his own cultural heritage, identify and acknowledge those characteristics of the culture that are shared among the diverse groups that make up South African society. This knowledge will help learners gain an understanding and appreciation of the uniqueness of the diverse culture that comprise the society and the heritage of the nation. The inclusive aspect of the curriculum also relates to developing the understanding and knowledge necessary for promoting national unity, in order to improve the condition of society. It also presents societal issues and problems in approachable and solvable ways (Hollins, 1996). Both a particularistic and inclusive multicultural curriculum will pro-

mote education that is rooted in democratic principles and practices.

In addition to redesigning the curricula, educating for democracy requires a creation as a new relationship, that which engages and involves learners in experiencing the joy and anxiety of their transformation and humanization during the learning process. The following section will first provide an overview of Paulo Freire's "problem-posing" education that is consistent with the 'guide on the side' strategy. Second, it will present a discussion of the conventional teaching strategy, the 'sage on the stage' that is pervasive in the South African schools and university. This strategy is consistent with Freire's banking education.

The Guide on the Side: The Problem-Posing Educator

To achieve this vision, educators need to establish a new educator-learner relationship, that which views the educator as a 'guide on the side,' i.e., one who interacts and dialogues with the learners, engages, involves, coaches and facilitates learners in classroom activities. This strategy does not treat learners as objects, nonhumans or empty vessels to be filled with "knowledge" from "out there." Rather, it views learners as sharing their lived experiences in dialogues, in order to transform their lives. Indeed, the Latin word *educare*, meaning "to draw out, guide and facilitate" embodies the transformative and humanizing quality of the 'guide on the side' strategy.

The following Chinese proverb drives the point home that educating for democracy and liberation requires learners' engagement and involvement in classroom dialogues and activities. It also affirms that the learner's interaction with the educator and peers are critical for optimal learning.

> What I hear, I forget;
> What I see, I remember;
> What I do, I understand.
> What I do together with others,
> I understand and remember well.
> (Chinese Proverb)

In addition, this proverb underscores that the principles and practices of democracy and liberation cannot be **taught** didactically. Such principles and practices can be **caught** by learners at different levels of education and carried over to their homes, communities and to the larger society. Thus, learners are more apt to practice the ethics and values they **catch,** rather than those they are **shown** and **taught** to embrace. When educators employ the 'guide on the side' strategy, both the content and the process become integral components of learning. Learners not only acquire knowledge of and about democracy, but they learn to live by it, to act on it, or act against it. Such an approach also emphasizes the importance of ecological education that embodies a **holistic** view of teaching. This method of education engages the physical, emotional, social, mental and spiritual aspects of each learner. The 'guide on the side' approach presents knowledge about democracy and the value of living in it, in the most practical and beneficial way for both the educator and the learner.

Through interaction and dialogue with the learners, the problem-posing educator breaks the vertical patterns characteristic of the banking education (the banking education will be discussed in the next section). He or she ceases to exist as the 'sage on the stage.' Rather, the educator becomes the 'guide on the side,' and works in a partnership with the learner. The educator is also taught by learners through dialogue, and in turn teaches while being taught. During this process of dialogue, both educator and the learner become jointly responsible for and engaged in a process of transformation.

However, dialogue cannot exist in the absence of the morally guiding principles of *yobuntu, agape* and *mitakuye oyasin.* Further, dialogue cannot exist without humility. The process of learning and teaching, through which both the educator and learners constantly construct, deconstruct and reconstruct knowledge, cannot be an act of arrogance. Thus, dialogue will be broken or stifled if members of the classroom community lack humility. Freire (1997, p. 71) points out the importance of humility in the process of dialogue when he asks:

> *How can I dialogue if I always project ignorance onto others and never perceive my own? How can I dialogue if I regard myself as a case apart from others? How can I dialogue if I regard myself as a member of the in-group of "pure" men, the owners of truth and knowledge, for whom all nonmembers are "these people" or "the great unwashed?" How can I dialogue if I start from the premise that naming the world is the task of an elite, and that the presence of the people in history is a sign of deterioration, thus to be avoided?*

Dialogue also requires an intense faith in humankind; faith in their power to make and remake, to create and recreate; faith in their vocation to be fully human — which is not the privilege of the elite, but the birthright of all humanity (Freire, 1997). True dialogue also requires that both the educators and the learners engage in **critical thinking.** Grounded in the principles of *yobuntu, agape,* and *mitakuye oyasin,* humility, faith and critical thinking dialogue becomes a horizontal relationship of which mutual trust between the dialoguers is the logical consequence. Trust is an **a priori** requirement for dialogue that is inherent in the 'guide on the side' approach. Such trust is obviously absent in the anti-dialogics inherent in the 'sage on the stage' method.

The Sage on the Stage: The Bank-Clerk Educator

Education in South Africa has always been an expensive endeavour for families, learners and society at large. Indications are that the cost of education will increase as it becomes critical that all citizens become educated for their own survival and for sustaining South Africa's new democracy. To address the issue of numbers and cost, the lecture method as a vehicle for delivering "knowledge" is very common in the schools and universities because it is inexpensive to conduct. One lecture presented to a hundred or more learners in

one lecture hall or classroom, proves to be a very convenient method of saving resources, but not of saving minds.

However, cost effective as it may seem, the issue of the lecture method has always been in the middle of a debate by both its advocates and by those who question its effectiveness for teaching. Its advocates find the lecture method valuable for surveying a whole field of knowledge through the medium that arouses interests and leads students to understanding. Lectures can repeat material in different ways — something books rarely do (Gage & Berlinger, 1991). They can give students the framework, an overview, and a critique unlike anything presently available. Lecturers bring their own aesthetic pleasure which gives students a kind of reinforcement that is not available in any educational procedures. On the other hand, its opponents hold that the lecture method was once useful; but now when books are so numerous, lectures are not necessary. Students also feel the lack of group work that produces an impersonal, stale and passive classroom experience (Gage & Berlinger, 1991).

In addition, a critical analysis of the lecture method reveals its fundamentally *narrative* character. This method involves a narrating subject (the educator), and the patient, listening, somewhat passive and inactive object (the learner). The learner's level of involvement is often limited only to receiving, filing and storing the deposits, thus, in the process of being narrated, the contents, whether values or empirical dimensions of reality, become lifeless and petrified. The educator in the classroom talks about reality as if it were motionless, static and "out there." She or he expounds on a topic completely alien to the existential experience of the learners. The educator's task is to "fill" the learner with the contents of her or his narration — contents which are detached from reality, disconnected from the totality that engendered them and could give them significance. Words become emptied of their concreteness and become hollow and alienated from the lived experiences of learners. The outstanding characteristic of this narrative education, then, is a litany of words, not their transformative power. For example, learners in the primary grades are required to memorize the Times Tables (2x4=8), or to learn that the state of Michigan is surrounded by the Great Lakes. The earner records and memorizes these Tables and facts, and at the end of the class period, in the mid-year or end of the year examination regurgitates them back to the teacher. No attempt is made to make 2x4 or the Great Lakes contextually relevant, culturally sensitive, and therefore, meaningful to individual learners.

> WHAT I HEAR, I FORGET;
> WHAT I SEE, I REMEMBER;
> WHAT I DO, I UNDERSTAND.
> WHAT I DO TOGETHER WITH OTHERS,
> I UNDERSTAND AND REMEMBER WELL.
>
> Chinese proverb

This narration leads the learner to memorize mechanically the narrated content. Worse yet, this method turns learners into "containers," into "receptacles" to be "filled" by the bearer of "knowledge," the teacher. The more completely she or he fills the receptacles, the better a teacher she or he is. The more meekly the receptacles permit themselves to be filled, the better students they seem to be. This is the banking concept of education, in which the scope of action allowed to the learner extends only as far as receiving, filing and storing the deposits. Based on this type of education, knowledge becomes a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable (teachers) upon those whom they consider to know nothing (the learner). As Freire (1997, p. 53) writes:

> *Education thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher the depositor. Instead of communication, the teacher issues communiques and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize and repeat.*

A great deal of teaching in South Africa takes the form of solo performance. The teacher is alone on the "stage" telling and showing without involving and engaging learners in the process and the experience of discovering knowledge. Such educators certainly have no clue of who is in the classroom, what learners bring with them into the learning environment, or what their educational and cultural aspirations are. This method does not prompt educators to establish a rapport with the learners, to motivate them and get them to pay attention. As long as learners are in the classroom, the notion is as stated by Freire (1997, p. 54) that:

> *the teacher teaches and the students are taught; the teacher knows everything and the students know nothing; the teacher thinks and the students are thought about; the teacher talks and the students listen — meekly; the teacher disciplines and the students are disciplines; the teacher chooses and enforces his or her choice and the students comply . . . the teacher is the subject of the learning and the students are the objects.*

The bank clerk teacher thus fails to perceive that this method of educating serves to minimize learners' creative power to act upon and to transform the world. This type of teacher also fails to realize that his method serves to dehumanize learners.

CONCLUSION

As educators rethink their new roles, i.e., moving from the 'sage on the stage' to the 'guide on the side' in order to prepare learners for critical thinking that is required to sustain and strengthen democracy, some crucial questions need to be addressed. How do teacher training programs in South Africa prepare pre- and in-service educators for the new media? Do they embody a language of empowerment that views educators as transformative intellectuals and

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

allows for the creation of literate occasions that promote the principles of *yobuntu, agape* and *mitakuye oyasin*? How do critical/progressive educators deal with criticism from the administration and colleagues for the political decisions they make? How do they keep their "faith" during the hard times?

EDUCATORS AS TRANSFORMATIVE INTELLECTUALS

South African schools and universities need to be defined as democratic public spheres. Such a definition serves to illuminate the role that educators will play as engaged and "transformative intellectuals." In his writings and lectures, Giroux (1992) speaks of educators as transformative intellectuals. By this he means that educators should be engaged in solving societal problems and they should engage and involve learners in the same process. The concept of educators as transformative intellectuals is essential for a number of reasons. It provides a theoretical basis for examining their work as a form of intellectual endeavor, as opposed to defining it in purely instrumental and technical terms. This clearly defines teaching within a network of empowering conditions that create the opportunities for educators to produce and redesign curricula and to restructure instructional strategies, rather than simply execute and implement "recipes" and "formulae" teacher training programmes invent for them. It speaks to efforts that affirm and dignify cultural identities and voices of learners, particularly of indigenous learners whom the previous education has devoiced and de-centered. It helps to redefine schools as part of the communities and neighbourhoods they serve, rather than defining them as existing in isolation or in a vacuum.

CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR LITERATE OCCASIONS

Literate occasions mean opportunities for all learners to share their lived experiences (cultures and languages), work in social relations that emphasize care and concern for one another and be introduced to forms of knowledge that are connected to their home cultures and languages, and that provide them with the opportunity to take risks and fight for a quality of life in which all human beings benefit. This is a form of education that recognizes that the guiding principles of *yobuntu, agape, mitakuye oyasin*, humility and trust are at the heart of what it means to strengthen rather than weaken the relationship between learning and empowerment on the one hand, and to sustain democracy on the other.

THOSE WHO, BY LEAVING, STAY

During his professional career, Freire made many hard decisions, some of which resulted in the rupture of political and collegial relationships. In his personal struggle for coherence, he decided that only "by leaving could he possibly recuperate the meaning of his work." What educators in South Africa must understand is that in the process of challenging the negative impact of traditional educational philosophies and practices, and in their attempt to implement new curricula and teaching strategies, they will often be accused of being "political" and "ideological." They will often experience "internal exile" within their work environment. When such moments get hold of them, they must always turn to what Freire (1993, pp. 139-140) said in the *Manifesto to Those who by Leaving, Stay* upon leaving his position as Secretary of Education in Sao Paulo:

> *Even though I will no longer be the secretary, I will continue to be near you in one way or the other. I will have more time to take on another type of presence. I am not leaving the fight, but simply moving to another front. The fight continues on the same. Wherever I am I will be engaged as you are in favor of democratic, popular public schools.*

In April of 1997, Freire with his Creator again made another hard decision between living and dying. The final decision was for him to relocate to another life in order to assume "another type of presence" and responsibility. His body may be laid to rest, however, his spirit, soul, love and legacy were with us yesterday, are with us today, and will be with us tomorrow.

We will always LOVE YOU Paulo, My Soul and Spiritual Brother!!!!

Ivy N. Goduka is in the Department of Human Environmental Studies at Central Michigan University, in Mount Pleasant.

References

Atkinson, R. & Locke, P. (1996). *Children as sacred beings.* Edited by Rutstein, N. & Morgan, M.

Healing Racism: Education's Role. MA: Springfield: Whitcomb Publishers.

Darder, A. (1998). *Reclaiming Our Voices: Emancipatory Narrative on Critical Literacy, Praxis and Pedagogy.* California Association for Bilingual Education (CABE).

Freire, P. (1998). *Teachers as cultural workers: Letters to those who dare to teach.* CO: Westview

Freire, P. (1997). *Pedagogy of the oppressed.* New York: Continuum.

Freire, P. (1994). *Pedagogy of hope: Reliving pedagogy of the oppressed.* New York: Continuum

Freire, P. (1993). *Pedagogy of the city.* New York: Continuum.

Freire, P & Betto, F. (1985). *Essa escola chamada vida. Sao Paulo: Atica*

Gage, L. & Berlinger, C. (1991). *Educational psychology.* Boston, MA: Michael Weisbrot.

Giroux, H.A. (1992). Educational leadership and the crisis of democratic government. *Edu*

Goduka, I.N. (1996). Reconstructing education to affirm unity in diversity. *South African Journal of Higher Education. 10*, 67-74.

Hollins, E.R. (1996). *Culture in school learning: Revealing the deep meaning.* New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Maslow, A.H. (1968). *The farther reaches of human nature.* New York: Penguin.

McLaren, P. (1997). Paulo Freire's legacy of hope and struggle. *Theory, Culture and Society. 14*, 147-153.

Ramirez, M. & Castanédo, A. (1974). *Cultural democracy, bicognitive development and education.* New York: Academic Press.

Tierney, W.G. (1993). *Building communities of difference: Higher education in the twenty-first century.* Westport, CN: Bergin & Garvey.

Paulo Freire in Memory

BY **ZUMARA CLINE**

Paulo Freire

Puro Brasilero
Life, love, freedom, hope
Laughter, sunshine
Tropics, beaches
Daring, dreaming

Critical pedagogy
Critical consciousness
Pedagogy of the Oppressed
Problem posing
Culture of silence

Praxis

Transferring knowledge, transforming action
Domesticating education, liberating education
Cultural domination
Subversive activity

Education for social justice
Education as the practice of freedom
Cultural circles
Changing the course of human events
Reading the world/reading the word

Paulo Freire

ZUMARA CLINE is a Family Literacy Director in Lompoc Unified Schools, Lampoc, California and Adjunct Faculty, Chapman University.

River Stone

BY DAVID HART

When I entered the muddied waters of the mainstream of education in the 1970s, I was a rainbow trout. I was a dewey-eyed trout who had learned by doing in an educational lab school. I applied the ideas in a sixth grade classroom. The local newspaper wrote an article about my classroom entitled, "They're A Long Way from the 3 R's." At the time, that was a compliment. Students worked in cooperative groups as historians, economists, sociologists, anthropologists, and geographers. They were answering questions that they generated about our community. The experience was meaningful to the teacher and the students.

Over a period of 15 years, I was transformed into a stone. I was unaware of the change. The currents of the stream dictated my movement. Although I was a river stone, I thought of myself as a rainbow trout. My rough edges were smoothed as the river proceeded from Ohio to Texas, and from Texas to California. I was not thinking critically.

I was a rainbow trout. I was a dewey-eyed trout who had learned by doing in an educational lab school. I applied the ideas in a sixth grade classroom.

Beached

The currents of the mainstream moved me to a beach. There I rested and read a newspaper. The following headlines caught my attention: "Freire Reaches 5 Million Illiterate People with National Literacy Program." That was an accomplishment. There was a second yellowed newspaper underneath the first paper. It was dated 1964. The headlines read as follows: " Freire, Traitor to Christ and Country of Brazil, Arrested and Exiled." Apparently, the literacy program was too successful, and threatened the military government. Accomplishments, arrest, and exile were at the surface of these stories.

Found

I found two books, *We Make the Road by Walking* and *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, buried beneath the surface of the sand. I started to read. I was awake, and engaged with the ideas of Paulo Freire. After I read these books, I found others buried in the sand. I continued to dig, relearn, read, and dig some more.

Learning How to Read Again

I was becoming aware of myself as a reader. Freire's work inspired me to ask the following questions: Am I merely absorbing what I read? What do I know? How do I know this? What is the perspective of this material? How am I applying these ideas? What am I becoming? Deep inside, Freire held the following motivating question: "I asked constantly myself, why, why is it possible that some children eat and others don't?" (Freire and Horton, 1990) Motivating questions guide an unfolding journey. They give a person purpose and direction.

Elza and Paulo Freire

As a father, husband, and teacher, I was drawn to thinking about the relationship that Freire had with his first wife, Elza. He loved Elza. How was this evident? He listened to her carefully, and included her fully in his life. He applied her ideas in his work. In his work with the people of Recife, she suggested that Paulo use the language of the people and not the language of the university. He respected her as a mother and teacher.

Learning About Teacher

What is a teacher? What does a teacher aim to become? A teacher is a critical learner. A teacher should have a child-like quality. A teacher respects the knowledge of the students, and learns how to teach them what they want to know. A teacher believes that knowledge is becoming. A teacher must figure out ways for students to go beyond their own thinking. The teacher believes that education is a process. A teacher does not impose his/her ideas on others. The teacher's authority develops the freedom of the students. Teachers need to become aware of the struggle. Teachers must think critically about their schools, the curriculum, the schedule, and the practices. Then they must act and think again.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Political Clarity

Freire's ideas work together. But his discussions concerning neutrality forced me to examine my situation. River stones are silent. They are turned and tumbled by the mainstream. They do not resist the current. Lack of action and silence are not neutral acts. They are immoral acts. The river stone is part of the educational mainstream. In the relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed, it is impossible to be neutral. This is the forceful part of Freire's philosophy. Political clarity is empowering and liberating. As a river stone, I did not understand that being passive was a non-neutral action. I just didn't see the connection between education and politics. I made curriculum choices daily. But, I didn't think of them as political decisions. My perspective was changing. I was becoming human again.

Selma

Paulo Freire had the opportunity to apply liberatory education in state-sponsored schools when he became the Secretary of Education of the municipality of Sao Paulo, Brazil in 1989. The book *Education and Democracy* examines the Inter Project, the educational reform effort that Freire guided, thoroughly. The authors interviewed many teachers. Selma, a first grade teacher at one of the project schools, perceived Freire as being distant from the reality of teaching in an inner-city school. She recognized the importance of the generative theme. She also learned how to learn with the students. What was the major weakness of the project's implementation? According to Selma, the teachers did not understand the theoretical basis of the project (O'Cadiz, Wong, and Torres, 1998).

Reinventing Freire

Selma makes an important point. Teachers were able to apply methods. But, they had difficulty understanding the philosophy behind the methods. This is a potential problem as schools in North America work with the ideas of Paulo Freire. Freire was not a stranger to the essence of this problem. Teachers are trained to perform methods. They are not challenged to think. Freire describes it as a "narration sickness" (Freire, 1970). Teachers need more experiences that require them to reflect. Teacher educators should guide students to understand the connection between theory and practice. Philosophical considerations and reflection should be part of all higher education courses for teachers.

As a river stone, I did not understand that being passive was a non-neutral action. I just didn't see the connection between education and politics.

In the book, *Paulo Freire, A Critical Encounter*, Peter McLaren warns against the oversimplification of Freire's ideas (McLaren and Leonard, 1993). If the ideas are simplified, they will lose their meaning. Consequently, it is important for teachers to wrestle with academic language. At the same time, communication is important. In her book, *Critical Pedagogy, Notes from the Real World*, Joan Wink applies Freire's ideas, and writes about Freire's philosophy using a personal, understandable style. As educators, we may have different points of departure on our journey with Paulo Freire. But, it is important to take action, and begin the journey.

The Whole Freire

I realized that Freire like all humans was incomplete. But I had a glimpse of his wholeness. Freire's life should not be divided into sections such as the academic, the teacher, the family person, the spiritual person, and the politician. When I was a river stone, my life was divided into distinct parts. For example, there was a crack between home and work. When he spoke with Myles Horton at Highlander, Freire did not appear to have cracks. Freire recognized domination as the theme of our epoch. His praxis bonded his life.

It's Really Not Magic

The story of the river stone has a magical quality. But, transformation is not a magical process. Transformation is rigorous. Although the seeds of social change can be planted in one night, the seeds grow at their own rate. The developing seeds require care. Social change is hard work. In a conversation with Paulo Freire, former Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere expressed frustration with the slow-moving changes and challenges in Tanzania during the 1970s. Freire offered Nyerere the following encouragement: "It (putting theory into practice) is not easy, but it's not impossible" (Freire and Horton, 1990).

Dave Hart is a 5th Grade Teacher at Palm Springs Unified School district, Palm Springs, California.

References

Freire, Paulo. *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Continuum, New York, 1970.

Horton, Myles and Freire, Paulo. *We Make the Road by Walking*. Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 1990.

McLaren, Peter and Leonard, Peter. *Paulo Freire, A Critical Encounter*. Routledge, London and New York, 1993.

O'Cadiz, Maria del Pilar, Wong, Pia Lindquist, and Torres, Carlos Alberto. *Education and Democracy*. Westview Press, Boulder, 1998.

Wink, Joan. *Critical Pedagogy, Notes from the Real World*. Longman, New York, 1997.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Subscribe to

DEMOCRACY & EDUCATION

Democracy & Education is published quarterly by the **INSTITUTE FOR DEMOCRACY IN EDUCATION.** Members of IDE automatically receive subscriptions to **Democracy & Education** and other publications, reduced conference fees, and access to IDE's curriculum and resource library. Fees for memberships are listed below.

Check one of the six categories:

- ❑ Associate Membership — $35
- ❑ Family Membership — $40
- ❑ Student Membership (must be a full-time student) — $25
- ❑ School Membership — $40 (includes two copies of all publications sent to one address)
- ❑ Canadian Membership — $45 (in US dollars)
- ❑ International Membership — $50 (in US dollars)

Name _____

Address _____

_____

Work Phone (____) _____ Home Phone (____) _____

Institutional Affiliation _____

E-mail Address _____

(Your E-mail address will be subscribed to IDE's national listerv, unless you indicate otherwise).

Make checks payable to Ohio University.

Mail subscriptions and address changes to:
INSTITUTE FOR DEMOCRACY IN EDUCATION
McCracken Hall
Ohio University
Athens, OH 45701-2979

Contact us at (740)593-4531 or
democracy@ohiou.edu

To learn more about the **INSTITUTE FOR DEMOCRACY IN EDUCATION**, visit our website at:
http://www.ohiou.edu/ide/home.html

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

INSTITUTE FOR DEMOCRACY IN EDUCATION

IDE Regional Offices

For more information or to get involved, please contact your nearest office!

MAIN OFFICE
Institute for Democracy in Education
McCracken Hall, Ohio University
Athens, OH 45701-2979
Phone: (740)593-4531
Fax: (740)593-0477
E-mail: democracy@ohiou.edu
Jaylynne N. Hutchinson, Director
Phone: (740)593-9827
E-mail: hutchinj@ohiou.edu

Democracy & Education
Jean Ann Hunt, Editor
National Louis University
Wheeling Campus
1000 Capitol Drive
Wheeling, IL 60090
Phone: 1-800-443-5522, ext. 5253
E-mail: jhun@wheeling1.nl.edu

CANADA
Calgary
Hans Smits
Faculty of Education
University of Calgary
2500 University Drive
Calgary, Alberta
CANADA T2N 1N4
Phone: (403)220-237-4058
E-mail: hsmits@ucalgary.ca

Ontario - Oakville
Bruce Lofquist
1326 Bronte Road
Oakville, Ontario
CANADA L6J 4Z3
Phone: (416)684-1371

GUATEMALA
Bienvenido Argueta
Facultad de Humanidades
Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala
Ciudad Universitana Zona 12
E-mail: bargueta@pnud.org.gt

UNITED STATES
California - Los Angeles
Cynthia McDermott
California State University - Dominquez Hills
School of Education
1000 East Victoria
Carson, CA 90747
Phone: (310)243-3920
E-mail: cmcdermott@csudh.edu

California - Southern
Tom Wilson
Chapman University
333 North Glassell
Orange, CA 92866
Phone: (949)854-7766
E-mail: twilson1@home.com

Colorado
Julie Ash
16 Crystal Circle
Carbondale, CO 81623
Phone: (970)963-4591
E-mail: jash@sopris.net

Illinois - Chicago
Bill Ayers
1040 West Harrison M/C 147
Chicago, IL 60607-7133
Phone: (312)996-9689
E-mail: bayers@uic.edu

Iowa
Roger Johanson
Coe College
1220 First Avenue NE
Cedar Rapids, IA 52402
Phone: (319)399-8510
E-mail: rjohanso@coe.edu

Indiana - Central
Terry O'Connor
Indiana State University
Center for Teaching and Learning
Dreiser Hall, R. 127
Terre Haute, IN 47809
Phone: (812)237-3053
E-mail: ctlocon@ruby.indstate.edu

Maryland
Kevin Lavey
814 Cathedral Street #3-rear
Baltimore, MD 21201
Phone: (410)752-4708

Michigan - South Central
Diane Brunner
Michigan State University
Department of English
215 Morrill
East Lansing, MI 48824
Phone: (517)355-1629
E-mail: brunner@pilot.msu.edu

Missouri
Sunny Pervil
Maryville University, Division of Education
13550 Conway Road
St. Louis, MO 63144
Phone: (314)993-3832
E-mail: pervil@maryville.edu

Nebraska
Steve Swidler
118 Henzlik Hall
Center for Curriculum & Instruction
University of Nebraska - Lincoln
Lincoln, NE 68588-0355
Phone: (402)472-0040
Fax: (402)472-8317
E-mail: sswidler@unlinfo.unl.edu

New York City
Mark Statman
459 Fifth Street
New York, NY 11215
Phone: (718)768-5484 ***or at:***
Eugene Lang College
New School for Social Research
65 West 11th Street
New York, NY 10011
Phone: (212)229-5857
(212)229-5617
E-mail: statmanm@aol.com
or statmanm@newschool.edu

North Carolina - Western
Lisa Bloom
211 Killian
Western Carolina University
Cullowhee, NC 28723
Phone: (828)227-7310
E-mail: bloom@wcu.edu

Ohio - Central
Rikki Santer
2102 Kentwell Road
Columbus, OH 43221
Phone: (614)442-5608
E-mail: MRoss43610@aol.com

Ohio - Northern
Thomas Kelly
John Carroll University
Department of Education
University Heights, OH 44118
Work phone: (216)397-4696
Home phone: (216)751-0157
E-mail: tkelly@jcu.edu

Ohio - Southeastern
Kari Weaver & Joette Weber
c/o McCracken Hall
Ohio University
Athens, Ohio 45701
Work phone: (740)593-4531
E-mail: ac081@seorf.ohiou.edu

Ohio - Southwestern
Suellyn Henke
350 McGuffey Hall
Oxford, OH 45056
Phone: (513)523-0458
E-mail: HENKESM@muohio.edu

Oklahoma
Mary John O'Hair
Center for School Renewal
& Democratic Citizenship
Department of Educational Leadership
& Policy Studies
University of Oklahoma
Norman, OK 73019-0260
Phone: (405)325-1267
Fax: (405)325-2403
E-mail: mjohair@ou.edu

Washington - Seattle
Ed Mikel
Antioch University
2326-6th Avenue
Seattle, WA 98121-1814
Phone: (206)441-5352, ext. 5617
E-mail: ed_mikel@mist.seattleantioch.edu

INSTITUTE FOR DEMOCRACY IN EDUCATION
College of Education
McCracken Hall
Ohio University
Athens, OH 45701-2979

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Permit No. 100
Athens, OH

ERIC Clrhs. on Urban Educ./IUME
Teachers College-Columbiana Univ.
525 West 120th Street
New York , NY 10027-6696

40

Call For Manuscripts

SPECIAL ISSUE

LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL & TRANSGENDER ISSUES IN SCHOOLS

The Institute for Democracy in Education is currently seeking manuscripts for the Fall issue of its journal *Democracy & Education*. We are looking for authors who have experienced and explored issues related to lesbian, gay,, bisexual and transgendered life in schools.

How does the inclusion of issues related to sexual orientation facilitate a healthier, more democratic learning community?

What have students done to create school environments which are inclusive of LGBT issues?

What story do you have to tell about an incident in which you learned something significant about LGBT issues in the classroom?

How can educators approach LGBT rights in the context of religious beliefs and community values?

How do we know if our schools are safe?

What role does visibility/invisibility play in creating safe schools for LGBT students, educators and parents?

How can teachers address gay/lesbian issues through classroom practices and subject matter with very young children? preadolescents? adolescents?

How can LGBT-bashing be addressed in schools in ways which go beyond simply punishing offenders, but lead to a greater understanding and sensitivity?

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: JULY 30, 1999

Send three double-spaced copies of your article for review to:
Pat Hulsebosch and Terry Jo Smith, Guest Editors, National-Louis University
18 South Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60603
Phulsebos@aol.com OR Terryjo321@emial.smsn.com

Democracy & Education is a journal for all who participate in the educational Process – teachers, administrators, parents, counselors, school board members and students – who believe that democratic school change must come from those at the heart of education.

Write for **Democracy & Education**

Democracy & Education would like you to write for upcoming issues. We'd like to hear from you about your successes and joyful failures, classroom projects and activities, reviews of useful materials, or discussions of issues concerning democratic classroom practice.

Please submit two double-spaced copies of each article and a copy of the file on a 3.5" floppy disk. Preferred software is Microsoft Word 6.0. Include references at the end of the text, and **include total word count.** Editorial guidelines available on request.

Guidelines for Manuscripts

Essays — Articles which demonstrate the theme of the issue in detail. Six to fifteen pages.

Teacher Files — Short pieces explaining a particular activity, unit, etc., used by a teacher in the classroom and related to the theme of the issue. Two to six pages.

Reflections — Brief thoughts and impressions of the world and democracy as they relate to teaching. Two to six pages.

Reviews — Examinations or evaluations of books, videos or other material related to the theme of the issue. Review should focus on the material's relevance to teachers. Three to six pages.